

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Exec Committee responds to 1988 Virginia memorial

By Mark Wingfield

NASHVILLE (BP) — No changes in funding national causes or in the appointment of trustees to national agencies will result from a "memorial" sent to the Southern Baptist Convention from Virginia Baptists.

The "Memorial from the Messengers of the 1988 Baptist General Association of Virginia to the Messengers of the 1989 Southern Baptist Convention" was referred to the SBC Executive Committee by messengers to the 1989 convention in Las Vegas, Nev. The Executive Committee finalized its response to the memorial Sept. 18.

A memorial is a seldom-used method of formal communication between two bodies. Virginia Baptists described their memorial as "an overture to another based on a summary or presentation of facts."

At the heart of the Virginia memorial is the question of how state bodies should relate to the national Southern Baptist body on points of disagreement.

In the memorial, Virginia Baptists asked the Southern Baptist Convention to respond to five specific issues regarding cooperation between state and national Baptist bodies. The document also included "A Conservative Response" as a minority report.

An SBC Liaison Committee appointed to deal with the memorial drafted a formal response to the memorial which was presented to the Executive Committee as information. Upon recommendation of the Liaison Committee, the Executive Committee issued five appeals as a result of the memorial.

The appeals call for "mutual partnership" among Baptists at all levels, seeking reconciliation amidst the denomination's diversity, the exercise of "brotherly love and fairness" in relationships, "openness and unity" among all Baptists, and an affirmation that decision making on the national level should be controlled by messengers to national conventions.

In the memorial, Virginia Baptists requested the SBC president to draw Virginia's representatives on national boards from individuals suggested by a vote of the state association. Appointments of SBC presidents have been a source of contention among differing factions within the denomination since 1979.

The Liaison Committee responded: "To establish the precedent of accepting nominees elected by state conventions for appointment by the Southern Baptist Convention president would be clearly a violation of Southern Baptist autonomy and convention polity."

Such an arrangement would "create a connectionalism that could seriously threaten the unique Southern Baptist autonomy," the Liaison Committee said. "Voluntary cooperation has to remain at its own initiative or it is not voluntary. When cooperation becomes systematized, it becomes legalized."

Negative designation of funds, another issue of polity raised in the memorial, was referred to the business and finance subcommittee of

the SBC Executive Committee by the Liaison Committee. The budget and finance subcommittee has not taken any action on the referral.

Virginia Baptists had requested that the SBC "develop a plan that permits a church, on conscience grounds, to choose to omit from its Cooperative Program gifts selected SBC budget items through a carefully developed plan." Such a plan would allow churches to keep their gifts to the denomination's unified missions budget from supporting certain national agencies they do not favor.

Such disagreements, which have characterized the past 12 years of internal convention conflict, have actually strengthened the Cooperative Program rather than hurt it, the committee's response says. "The Liaison Committee elects to believe that the upheaval in Southern Baptist life, though painful and hurtful in many ways, has nonetheless helped to rescue the denomination and the Cooperative Program from a much more critical decline . . . by substantially strengthening the participation of Southern Baptist people in the life of the convention."

Rather than suggesting a means to accomplish the Virginia request, the Liaison Committee called for greater support of the Cooperative Program in its current form.

Other issues raised in the Virginia memorial were funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the nature of theological education in the SBC, and a request for "a new style of relating" based on a partnership principle.

Concerns about the BJCPA, a Washington-based agency dealing with church-state issues, was settled at the denomination's annual meeting in New Orleans in June, the committee response says. In New Orleans messengers voted to reduce BJCPA funding from \$391,596 to \$50,000 and give a similar program assignment to the SBC Christian Life Commission.

Likewise, concerns about theological education were addressed by the 1987 Peace Committee report and need no further attention, the Liaison Committee said.

The Liaison Committee offered no immediate suggestions for developing the "new style of relating" called for in the memorial. However, the committee's response notes, "There are always some who cannot stand with good conscience in the support of certain actions and positions of the majority."

The only solution to such "inevitable" impasses is "majority rule tempered with Christian grace on both sides of an issue," the response says.

Julian Motley of North Carolina chaired the Liaison Committee. Other members were Fred Wolfe of Alabama, Ira Craft of South Carolina, Edward Drake of Texas, Ronnie Floyd of Arkansas, James Jones of Kentucky and Don Whitt of Tennessee. Executive Committee chairman Sam Pace served as an ex officio member by virtue of his office.

Wingfield writes for HMB.

"I found what I was looking for at the end of a dusty road"

By Anne W. McWilliams

A dusty road runs down the hill to Chester Church. "I found what I was looking for at the end of a dusty road," said Patricia Rutledge, a member of that church.

"In some cases," said the pastor, Rob Faulk, "we get a bleak picture for the country church, but it doesn't have to be that way. Here is one church that has proved it."

Neither grocery store nor gasoline station graces Chester. Probably if all the residents of the Choctaw County hamlet gathered at the Baptist church, there'd be 30 present.

However, from October, '89, through August, '90, this church counted 98 additions, 62 of them professions of faith, making a total of 447 members! In the past 10 years, the Sunday School average has almost tripled, from 100 to 283.

Enlargement of the sanctuary was necessary to care for the burgeoning crowd. On July 14, of this year, when the renovated sanctuary was dedicated, Sunday School set a high record of 375.

What is the secret of all this growth? Faulk gives some keys:

(1) "We set no boundaries to visitation. We visit everywhere we find people, even if it's the four miles to Ackerman, 15 miles to Eupora, or 24 miles to Starkville. People in this area are accustomed to driving 15 miles to a movie or a Wal-Mart, so they don't mind driving that far to church. Some of our members drive 50 miles round-trip to church. Some come here from the panhandle of Choctaw County, and some from within the city limits of Eupora.

(2) "We have a vision of victory. I guess that's my philosophy of evangelism. You don't limit yourself to just your community. I always look at visitation like I did at dating my wife. Some men are afraid to ask for a date — afraid she will not say yes. It didn't bother me. I'd call for a date. All she could say was no. (He married Julia Ellis.) All people can do when we ask them to church is say no. We

invite them, and expect them to say yes. After all, what can they do to us? They won't call a lawyer or send us to jail! Why fear asking them?"

Twice a year he sets Prospect Sunday. "We promote it like a revival," he said. "From first grade up will turn in a list of prospects. The secretary eliminates duplicates, and groups names by families. At teachers' meetings, I assign prospects to class volunteers. This year we have added 200 prospects to our existing list. Of 360 prospects visited in the past year and a half, 153 have joined our church."

Thursday nights are for Sunday School visitation of prospects and absentees. On a recent such night, 42 went visiting. (Monday nights, the pastor and Deacon of the Week go to see those who visited the church on Sunday.) If one is absent from Sunday School more than four weeks, he or she will get a visit. If one is absent six weeks, the pastor might visit.

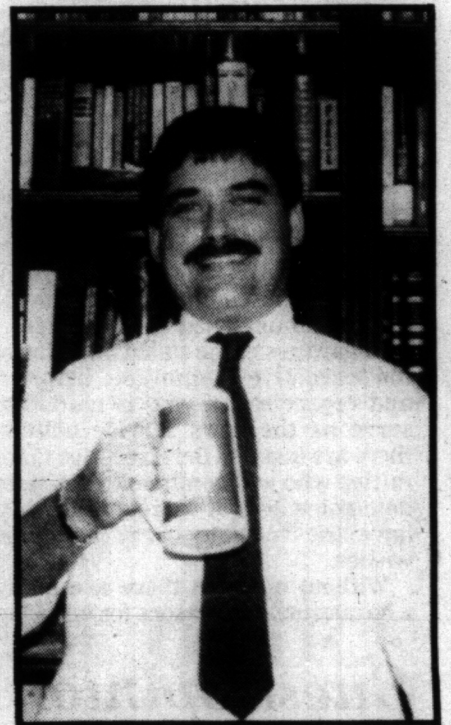
Four times a year, they set a high attendance day. Before each of these, they set a goal for a blitz — say 50 people going door to door, to contact the entire Sunday School roll.

"Then we can attribute growth to dedicated deacons and teachers willing to visit and to an active prospect list," the pastor said, in summary. "Usually no one is just going to walk into a new church without being asked."

Senior adults, the Keen-agers, are the telephone committee to call prospects and absentees.

Discipleship Training averages 154. "We offer curriculum to meet needs," Faulk said. "Classes in Romans, marriage, spiritual gifts, doctrine, and classes for new Christians. Children's choirs meet at the same time."

To enlarge the old sanctuary, wings were added, with a step up on each side of the existing room, so that the new place would seat 425, plus 45 in the choir. Bill Mann, architect, member of Calvary Church, Eupora, designed the wings. Two unusual



Rob Faulk, pastor of Chester Church, says, "I look at visitation like I did at dating my wife . . . At Chester Church, we invite people to church, and expect them to say yes!"

triangular windows in the wings were given by the pastor's father-in-law, Stanley Ellis, and his wife, Ann, of Mathiston. Probably 135 years old, they came from a church in New Orleans. The curved wood that separates the panes, appears to be teakwood, possibly from the Orient. Sanctuary redecoration included wallpapering of the wainscoting.

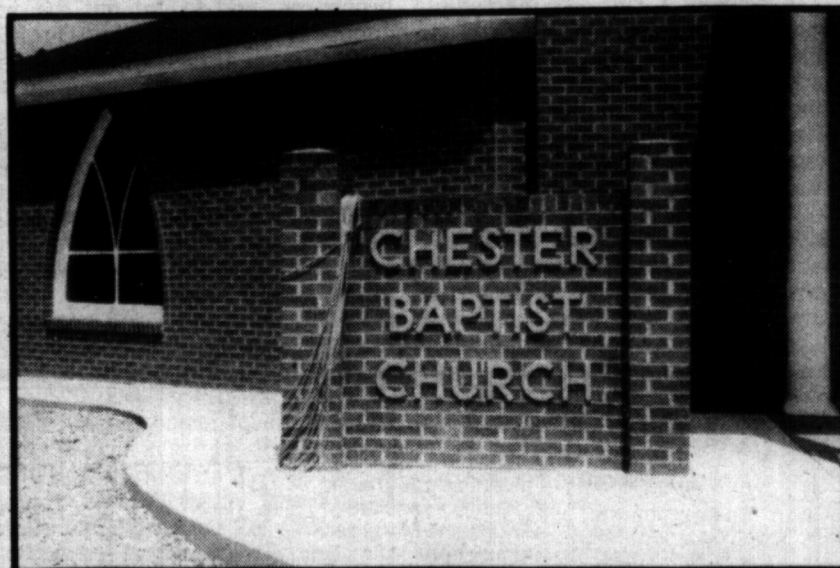
Cost for the sanctuary project was \$44,800, partly because 28 members of the church are carpenters, and donated their labor.

Also, in the 20 months Faulk has been pastor at Chester, the church has built a new parsonage, bringing the total debt to \$90,000 — a debt now already paid. At the dedication service, J. Roy McComb, pastor of First Church, Columbia, was featured speaker. "We roasted a pig," said Faulk. "The fellowship hall is not big enough, so we ate in shifts. Our next plan is for a multi-purpose building — but not right away."

The pastor and his wife and three children, Robert Stanley, 14 months, Laura Hope, 11, and Miranda Claudette, 8, now live in the new house. The old parsonage is in use for education and recreation.

At Mississippi State, Faulk majored in English and secondary education, and received a teacher's certificate. Afterward, however, he felt the call to ministry and entered and was graduated from New Orleans Seminary. He had grown up in rural Webster County near Eupora.

"I am thankful to serve in a country church," he said. "because that is my heritage." Patricia Rutledge was not the only one who found what she was looking for at the end of a dusty road.



Wings were added to Chester Church's sanctuary. At the front of each wing, a 135-year-old triangular window was installed. These windows had formerly been in a church in New Orleans.

Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

Editing from the floor

Any thought that the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee intends to provide a free news service for Southern Baptists was erased last week during the committee's meeting in Nashville.

The committee voted to tell Baptist Press what to send out in its mailings. The vote was not in the nature of a request. It was an order. Actually, it happened twice, so there was two orders.

The committee voted to tell Baptist Press to release the entirety of the message presented to the committee by SBC President Morris Chapman without editing, and it voted to tell Baptist Press to release the entirety of a resolution on the Cooperative Program that had been adopted by the committee.

Since the firing of Baptist Press Director Al Shackelford and News Editor Dan Martin on July 17, officers of the Executive Committee have insisted that the committee will provide a free and unbiased news service.

Regardless of the stated intention of the Executive Committee, however, and regardless of who is named to serve as the news service editors, there are those on the Executive Committee who will continue to desire to determine how it is run. And they have the votes to carry out their wishes.

Without question there are many who question the reasons for opposing

such actions as were taken by the Executive Committee. There are many who say that if nothing is said about the way things are done among Southern Baptists, the controversy will go away.

That is true. It is also true that the Southern Baptist Convention would have capitulated to a small group that has captured control of the convention and is determined that its objectives will be carried out. And that is the reason for the need of a free press among democratic people. The people may continue to do as they have been doing. But they need to know what is going on. They need to make their decisions on the basis of as much information as can be made available.

That is the reason the Constitution of the United States says in the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press . . ."

The message that Chapman presented was fine. To determine by vote of the committee that the message shall be carried by Baptist Press, however, is to do the editing of Baptist Press from the floor of the committee. That would cause hopeless confusion. And could there be an editor who would not wonder when he would make decisions that would not find favor with the Executive Committee and who would not feel that he is simply a promotional

person doing the wishes of the committee?

And what will be the committee's decision about the next president's message?

The resolution concerning the Cooperative Program was fine also and no doubt would have been carried on its own merit. But what other pronouncements will the committee make that it will want to have released by Baptist Press? On this one there was even a suggestion by Charles Sullivan, the immediate past chairman of the committee, and still an officer, that the committee enlist the state executive directors in an effort to induce the state papers to carry the resolution.

Baptist Press was the product of the insistence of the state paper editors 44 years ago. It was placed with the Executive Committee in order to keep it free.

It had pressure, but it remained free until July 17.

There is nothing that can be done about the present situation. It is too late.

Southern Baptists, however, need to know.

In the meantime, there was no movement to replace the fired editors of Baptist Press. It is now operating under the direction of Vice President Ernest Mosley. Mosley is the only remaining vice president of the normal

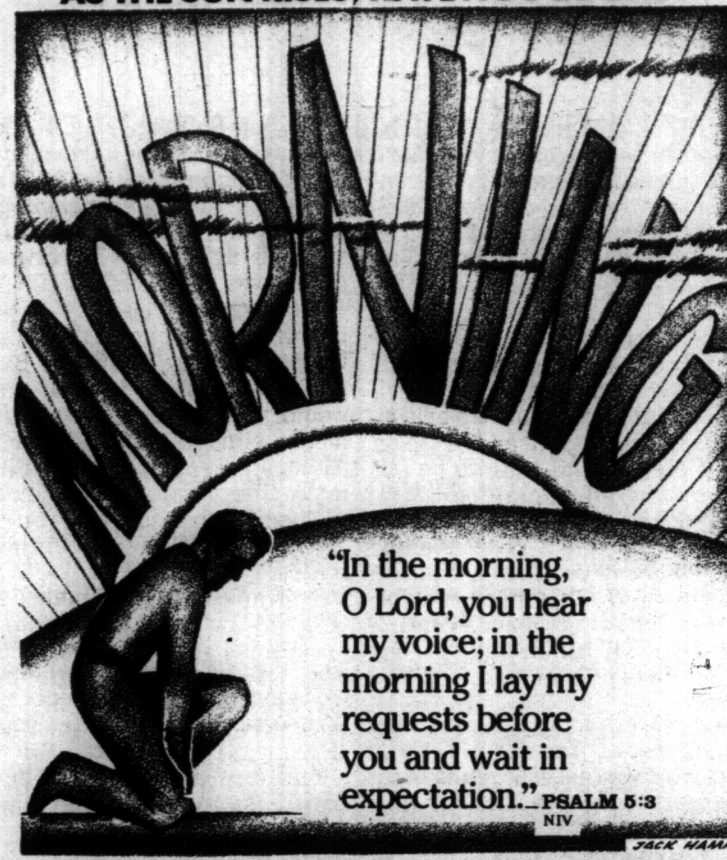
complement of three.

On the other hand, the Executive Committee took steps to replace the fired Baptist Press news editor; the vice president for public relations and director of Baptist Press, who was fired; and the vice president for business and finance, who resigned to join the staff of Bellevue Church, Memphis. Mosley is executive vice president.

The three vacancies could be filled

before the next meeting of the Executive Committee in February. By committee action at this meeting, the officers of the committee are empowered to fill the vacancies on an interim basis until the next meeting of the committee. In the past, vice-presidents usually have been nominated by the president and have come to the floor of the Executive Committee after personnel and administrative committee action.

AS THE SUN RISES, HAVE A GOOD DAY!



Guest opinion . . . Together against gambling

By Dale Little

After jumping into the riverboat gambling issue with both feet and being swamped with the local battle, it occurred to me that we have the same problem with riverboat gambling that I had with a rattlesnake the other day. I ran over the snake with my car, but that only slowed him down. I shot him down the middle, but he was still getting away. It wasn't until I took my machete and cut off his head that I was sure he was dead.

In several counties in Mississippi we are desperately trying to kill a snake we call riverboat gambling. The problem is that we are shooting at the wrong end. The tail end of the beast is threatening to wipe out civilized society as we know it in all counties bordering the Mississippi River. The head of the beast is trying to swallow the whole state of Mississippi.

Most of Mississippi Baptists do not know that, according to the new gaming law, if riverboat gambling is ever voted into a county, the citizens of that county will never be able to petition against it again. The new gaming law passed by our own Legislature allows proponents of gambling to return year after year filing for a gaming license but allows the opponents to gambling only one loss. There could not be a

more unfair law. This must be changed on the state level.

Most citizens of our state also do not know that the proposed Gaming Commission will be given more power in our state than the Mississippi Highway Patrol, the local sheriff's department, the local police department, and the statewide Alcohol and Beverage Control. Folks, it is time we stop this beast; and to do that, we will have to cut it off at the head.

First let's go back to when it started in our Mississippi Legislature. By their own vote, the majority of our representatives did not have the intestinal fortitude to cut spending or increase taxes, so they are now trying to shove this bitter pill of gambling down our throats and trying to force us to swallow it. Our own elected officials have put the citizens of Mississippi at the mercy of gamblers and organized crime. We must stop this exploitation of the people of Mississippi before the first paddlewheel turns. Write, call, or contact your representatives immediately. Let them know of your concern over this issue. Talk to anyone who in any political position might be able to help. Encourage them to strike the gaming law from the books of our state. Encourage our politicians to

make a decision worthy of the public trust given to them by the voters and take this disastrous and unnecessary burden off the shoulders of every law-abiding citizen in Mississippi. If you have any social or political resources or contacts at all, now is the time to use them.

Second, those of us trying to keep riverboat gambling from getting into our counties need a bigger stick. I appeal to citizens everywhere to pray that this law will be thrown out immediately. Pray for all those fighting this battle on the home front. Then contribute to help fight riverboat gambling. Each county organization needs \$12,000-\$20,000 to properly circulate petitions, call a special election, advertise, produce and distribute brochures, and to get out the vote against riverboat gambling. Our Lord has cattle on a thousand hills, and a few are needed right now to help win this battle. If you, or your business, or your organization can help in any way, it would be very much appreciated. Time is short. We have approximately 30 days to get our petitions to the County Board of Supervisors and two more months to get the vote. We need all the help we can get.

We are facing increased crime, prostitution, murder, political corruption,

and demoralization of our society. When and if this is ever over, concerned citizens will have spent thousands of dollars and thousands of volunteer hours to defeat an issue that should never have arisen.

If we value the safety of our families, the freedom within our counties and state, and the continued progress of industry and the work ethic in our state, then we must put a stop to riverboat gambling now and forever.

A renewed vigor

It is to be hoped that Bold Mission Thrust took on renewed vigor with the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee last week. Not much was being said about the emphasis until June, when at his first Executive Committee meeting, new member Larry Otis of Tupelo moved that a reaffirmation of Bold Mission Thrust be considered.

As a result, more than 20 pages of material supporting the concept of Bold Mission Thrust was in the notebook of Executive Committee members to be considered, and the concept was reaffirmed.

Another Mississippian, Owen Cooper, was instrumental in the initiation of Bold Mission Thrust when, in 1974, as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he appointed a missions study committee that reported in 1976 to the convention in Norfolk,

Va. The report adopted by that convention resulted in the launching of Bold Mission Thrust in 1977 at the convention in Kansas City.

The aim of Bold Mission Thrust is to make a Christian witness available to every person on earth by the year 2000.

As controversy seized the convention in 1979 and intensified with ensuing years, interest in Bold Mission Thrust seemed to wane. Hopefully, the action taken by the Executive Committee last week will revive interest in the emphasis and get it back into high gear.

Otis is to be commended for recognizing a need and calling attention to it, even in his first meeting as an Executive Committee member. Now may we as Mississippi Baptists and Southern Baptists take steps to understand the need and act on it.

Other organizations fighting Riverboat gambling include Signet, Inc. in Vicksburg, P. O. Drawer A, Vicksburg 39180, phone 631-5312; in Greenville, First Baptist Church, P. O. Box 1163, Greenville 38702, phone 334-9452; and in Gulfport, Citizens for Quality Life, P. O. Box 2363, Gulfport 39505, phone 832-4311.

Dale Little is director of missions for Adams-Union Baptist Association and moderator of Adams County Together Against Gambling (ACTAG).

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Hiring, bylaws are top committee changes

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention gave its officers interim power to employ staff members and recommended changes in a controversial SBC bylaw during its Sept. 17-18 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

In order for the Executive Committee officers to fill several key staff vacancies, members changed a stipulation in the committee's bylaws that previously required all hirings on the vice presidential level to be approved by the full committee.

The amended bylaw permits the six officers — chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and three subcommittee chairmen — to employ people for "certain staff positions" on an interim basis until the full committee can consider the hiring at its next regular meeting.

Permission to hire must be granted to the officers each time the interim practice is used and requires approval of two thirds of the full committee. Also all committee members must be informed ahead of time about each prospective employee.

After approving the change, the committee adopted a separate recommendation putting the new hiring practice in force immediately. The resignation of two top Executive Committee employees and the firing of two more have created a situation that "borders on a crisis," said Charles Sullivan of Lenoir City, Tenn., chairman of the subcommittee that brought both recommendations.

The officers were authorized to fill the positions of vice president of business and finance, which has been open since the resignation of Tim Hedquist last January; vice president for public relations, a vacancy created by the July firing of Al Shackelford, who also served as director of Baptist Press, the denomination's news service; and "Baptist Press personnel."

Members of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee were told committee President Harold Bennett intends to separate the public relations duties from the Baptist Press post by making each a vice presidential position. The position of news editor has been open since the firing of Dan Martin in July. Marv Knox resigned as features editor earlier.

Neither Bennett nor Sullivan would say which positions would be filled

first, but Sullivan said three candidates are being seriously considered from among the 40-50 names submitted for the various openings. Sullivan said the business and finance post is "a high priority" because of the time it has remained vacant.

Although the revised bylaw permits the officers to act on a recommendation from "any Southern Baptist," Sullivan later told reporters that would not mean someone could be hired without Bennett's approval. Although Bennett will continue to make the final recommendations, Sullivan explained, "everyone needs to know they have input to this committee."

Sullivan pointed out another section of the bylaw requires the committee president to recommend all employees that need committee approval. "What we are trying to do is walk arm in arm with Dr. Bennett," he said.

"I don't think my authority has been reduced," Bennett told reporters. "This makes it possible for the officers to assist in the process of employing somebody." Although the bylaw change was initiated by the officers, Bennett said he is "not threatened by it."

In other business, the Executive Committee's attorneys, James Guenther and James Jordon of Nashville, suggested the committee clarify the procedure for the election of SBC trustees. The attorneys said SBC Bylaw 16 is unclear whether the Committee on Nominations brings a "report" or "nominations."

If treated as nominations, under Robert's Rules of Order, time must be allowed to receive all other nominations and an alternate slate of nominees would be permissible. If treated as a report, slates would be disallowed and a motion to cut off debate would be permissible.

Rulings by recent SBC presidents have handled the Committee on Nominations as a report.

Although the attorneys recommended the "nominations" model be adopted in the revised bylaw, members of the administrative and convention arrangements subcommittee asked that the "report" model be pursued instead.

The Executive Committee handled many matters referred to the body from the June meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. The

committee declined to act on most of the referrals, including proposals to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention; set a minimum age for messengers to the annual convention; set a minimum age for trustees of SBC agencies; allow state conventions to nominate members from their states to the SBC Committee on Nominations or the SBC Committee on Committees; lower the number of church members required for a state or regional convention to earn representation on SBC boards; and limit participation of SBC messengers who are members of dually aligned churches.

The Executive Committee authoriz-

ed further study on the qualifications for churches to participate in the Southern Baptist Convention, which was the subject of several SBC referrals.

In other business, the committee: — Asked the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs not to reduce the Southern Baptist representation on the 54-member committee from 18 to 11. Such a change is expected to be approved during the BJCPA's annual meeting Oct. 1-3 because of the SBC's 87 percent reduction in funding of the BJCPA.

— Asked Southern Seminary to consider amending several provisions in its articles of incorporation that allow

the seminary's trustee board to remove fellow board members;

— Reaffirmed their commitment to Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's plan to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000;

— Approved the final report of the SBC Liaison Committee.

— Heard that the debt on the \$10.5 million SBC Building in Nashville had been paid off.

Contributing to this story were Bob Allen of the Baptist True Union, Tammi Ledbetter of the Indiana Baptist, and Bill Webb of the Illinois Baptist. Greg Warner is associate editor, the Florida Baptist Witness.

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, September 27, 1990

Published Since 1877

Joint Committee objects to Defense Department policy

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Christian Life Commission have objected to a U.S. Defense Department policy that prohibits the mailing of Bibles and other devotional literature to military personnel stationed in the Middle East.

Tens of thousands of U.S. troops have arrived in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait August 2. The Saudi legal system, based on the teachings of Islam, places restrictions on the practice of any faith other than Islam.

Since U.S. troops are based in Saudi Arabia at that country's invitation, American policy makers have worked assiduously to avoid offending Muslim sensibilities. Among their efforts is a policy prohibiting the mailing of any "religious materials contrary to the Islamic faith" — including items for personal use — to personnel in Saudi Arabia.

"While we can certainly understand

the desire to be sensitive to our host nation, we think our service personnel's ability to receive this kind of literature is of crucial importance," wrote James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, in a Sept. 10 letter. The letter was sent to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Postmaster General Anthony Frank.

In a separate letter to Cheney, Richard Land, executive director of the CLC, said, "Surely our grateful hosts in the Persian Gulf would accede to a reasonable accommodation of fundamental religious freedom for U.S. service members. We urge you to do whatever is necessary to permit prompt delivery of Bibles and other religious materials through the Armed Forces postal system."

"The fact that our service personnel are in an area of the world not protected by the free exercise rights in our constitution does not mean that they have lost their religious freedom," Dunn continued.

"We at the Baptist Joint Committee believe that religious liberty is not dependent upon any particular political system. It transcends national boundaries and ideology. Religious liberty has fundamental theological moorings and, as our forebears noted, is an unalienable gift of God," Dunn said.

"The Department of Defense has a long tradition of accommodating the religious needs of its personnel," Land said in his letter. "The religious mail rule, however, is a troubling departure from this tradition. It is unconscionable that the United States would send its sons and daughters into harm's way, and at the same time deny them the spiritual solace to which they are guaranteed access by the Constitution they are defending, at the risk of their lives."

Dunn referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, written in 1948, which asserts a right to "freedom of thought, conscience and (See DEFENSE on page 5)

Baptist workers return to Jordan and Yemen

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Four Southern Baptist representatives have returned to their work in Jordan and Yemen despite rising political tensions in the area, a Southern Baptist official said.

Gerry Volkart from Boonville, Mo., and Pat Frost from Parks, Ark., returned Sept. 16 to their teaching posts at the Amman Baptist School in Amman, Jordan, according to Dale Thorne, area director for Southern Baptist work in the Middle East and North Africa.

Cheryll Harvey from Sudan, Texas, also returned to her classroom at the Ajloun Baptist School in Ajloun, Jordan, Thorne said. In Yemen, Beverly Thomas from Senatobia, Miss., returned Sept. 18 to Jibla, Yemen, where she will resume her nursing work at the Jibla Baptist Hospital.

Mrs. Thomas rejoined her husband, Robert Thomas from Etowah, Tenn., after evacuating to Cyprus with 11 other Southern Baptist workers in late August.

Mrs. Thomas temporarily has left her two children, Beverly, age 12, and Ginny, age 10, with the 15 other Southern Baptist workers who evacuated to Cyprus, Thorne said.

Overseas messages from the returning workers did not say why they felt it was now safe to return, Thorne said. However, he said he believes each person considered the situation carefully and determined that she could still be an effective worker despite rising anti-Western and anti-American feelings in the region.

The current changes bring the number of Southern Baptist workers to 12 in Jordan and 11 in Yemen.

CLC board approves \$489,284 for D.C.

By Louis Moore

NASHVILLE (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission approved a new budget for 1991, allocating almost 35 percent of the agency's \$1.4 million annual resources for its greatly expanded Washington office, and the remaining 65 percent for its work in Nashville.

The allocation of \$489,284 for the CLC's Washington office includes the \$365,328 increase given the agency in June by the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans. The \$489,284 figure includes what the agency has spent in the past for its Washington office as well as a transfer of some

funds from its Nashville operation to its Washington office.

The commission opened its Washington offices on a part-time basis in 1987. It added its first full-time staff member to its Washington office in September 1989.

At their semi-annual meeting in Nashville Sept. 10-13, commissioners also elected two new program staff members for the Washington office and authorized the hiring of a receptionist/secretary there. Commissioners unanimously elected Michael Whitehead, a lawyer and deacon from First Church of Raytown, Mo., as

general counsel and director of Christian citizenship and religious liberty, and Tom Strode, a journalist on the staff of Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, as its director of news and information/Washington.

The Southern Baptist Convention in June expanded the Christian Life Commission's program statement and budget to include religious liberty issues.

Commission Executive Director Richard D. Land said commissioners interpreted the votes in June as a strong desire on the part of the convention (See CLC on page 5)

Committee rallies behind Cooperative Program

By Greg Warner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Cooperative Program, which has become the new battleground in the 11-year Southern Baptist controversy, got a vote of confidence from the denomination's Executive Committee during the group's Sept. 17-18 meeting in Nashville, Tenn.

Support for the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist Convention's primary funding channel, came in many forms during the two-day meeting — a resolution from committee members, words of testimony from those who receive CP funds, and a warning from SBC President Morris Chapman.

"The organization of a funding program designed to go around the Cooperative Program is unacceptable to mainstream Southern Baptists and may well lead to a permanent break from the convention," Chapman, pastor of First Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, warned in his first presidential address to the Executive Committee.

The alternate funding program to which Chapman referred was adopted by about 3,000 moderate Southern Baptists who attended the Consultation of Concerned Baptists last month in Atlanta and will be in place Oct. 1.

The 76-member Executive Committee, which controls the purse strings for the Cooperative Program, has itself become an issue in the battle over the denomination's \$135 million missions-and-ministry budget. Participants in the Atlanta consultation frequently blamed past Executive Committee actions for their decisions

to divert Cooperative Program funds.

But no specific mention was made of the Atlanta meeting during the Executive Committee's plenary sessions.

In addition to affirming the Cooperative Program, committee members changed their bylaws to give their six officers power to fill several top staff vacancies — including the two openings created by the July firing of the Baptist Press director and news editor — before the body's next regular meeting in February, when the hirings could be approved by the full committee. Previously only the full committee could fill top posts.

And members rejected numerous SBC bylaw changes that were requested by individual messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention last June. But the committee asked that Bylaw 16, which provides for the election of trustees to SBC entities, be clarified in a way that would prohibit the nomination of a full slate of alternate trustees.

The committee's agenda, which covered mostly routine and technical matters, was shortened by half a day because of the speed of business. There was little debate and most actions were approved without opposition.

But underlying the meeting's harmonious tone was the theme of the Cooperative Program, which brought expressions of both concern and confidence.

In an apparent reference to a Sept. 18 Nashville newspaper article that said SBC leaders are "reeling" from

the threat of an alternate funding plan, James Jones of Campbellsville, Ky., introduced the Executive Committee's CP resolution by saying:

"We're not reeling. We're thanking God for how he's going to bless us."

The resolution, which was adopted unanimously, calls for members of the Executive Committee to "affirm our past, present, and future support of the Cooperative Program" and urges "all Southern Baptists to stand together in support of the Cooperative Program so that many more individuals might come to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior."

"The Cooperative Program was established to avoid the costly, time-consuming, and often confusing and competitive process of a societal approach to missions," the resolution notes. It also expresses "deep appreciation to those churches which have recently increased their giving to the Cooperative Program" and urges every church and individual "to consider prayerfully following their excellent example."

In a departure from the adopted agenda, members opened their first plenary session with an appeal from James Griffith, executive director of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia, the only state convention that still sends half of its Cooperative Program receipts to the national CP budget.

Griffith reported he and other state executives who met last week adopted a resolution "urging full and strong support of the Cooperative Program." Cutting support for the CP, he sug-

gested, would be like "stepping on the oxygen tube" and would bring "demise to many of the things we have held dear."

Cooperative Program testimonies were infectious during the committee's fall meeting, which is the traditional time for SBC entities that receive funding from the CP to make their requests from the 1991-92 budget.

About half of the agencies, institutions, commissions, and committees that made requests affirmed their support for the Cooperative Program, and some offered warnings of their own:

— "Any reduction in the Cooperative Program will further affect vital ministries" at Golden Gate Seminary, said seminary President William Crews, who reported the Mill Valley, Calif., school already had reduced its budget 25 percent.

— "It's time to pay the bill; we must support the Cooperative Program," urged Lewis Drummond, president of Southeastern Seminary. Drummond, who said enrollment at the Wake Forest, N.C., school is up 10 percent over last year, thanked his fellow seminary presidents for allowing Southeastern to receive more than its share of CP funding while it suffered from reduced enrollment in recent years.

— Acknowledging growing concern over the future of the Cooperative Program, the president of the Stewardship Commission called for his agency to launch an expanded CP promotion plan.

"We do not need to develop a siege

mentality," said A. R. Fagan. "We need a holy offensive in this area."

— Warning that "you don't force" cooperation, Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks said "it's going to take more than a resolution" to preserve a strong Cooperative Program. "Leaders in the convention somehow are going to have to restore some trust," he said.

The HMB "stands firmly, strongly in support of the Cooperative Program" as its primary means of support, Larry Lewis, HMB president, said.

Warner is associate editor, Florida Baptist Witness.

State presidents elect Hamilton

The State Convention Presidents' Fellowship, meeting in Nashville last week, elected as president Eddie Hamilton, pastor of Oak Forest Church, Jackson, and president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The organization, begun in 1984, meets three times a year. Its purpose, Hamilton said, is for fellowship, the sharing of ideas, and support of each other and support of the convention.

In Nashville, the group met with Morris Chapman, SBC president. In the meeting before that, they met with agency leaders and prayer leaders of the SBC and prayed for the convention. "We probably will do that again next June," Hamilton said.

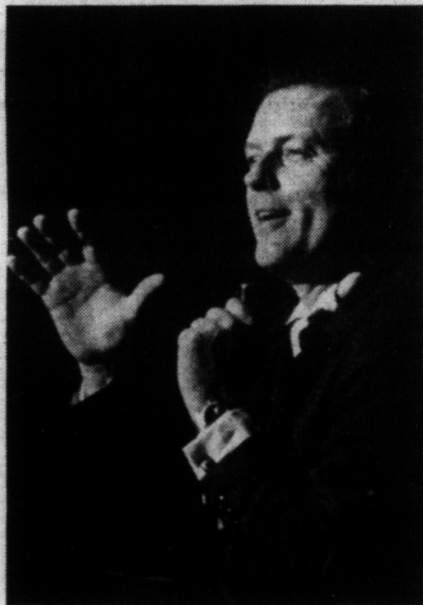
Claude Rhea dies of heart attack in Paris

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP) — Claude H. Rhea, 62, president of Palm Beach Atlantic College, died of an apparent heart attack Sept. 19 in Paris, France, on a business trip.

Rhea had been president of Palm Beach Atlantic College since February 1982. He came to the college from Samford University where he was dean of the school of music.

Surviving Rhea are his wife, Carolyn Turnage Rhea; his mother, Cecile Walden Rhea; two sons, Claude H. III of Reston, Va., and Charles Randall of Tuscaloosa, Ala.; a daughter, Margaret Elizabeth of New York City; and one grandchild, Nancy Elizabeth.

Foster Harwell, vice president for academic affairs, will be acting president until an interim is named by the



Claude Rhea

board of trustees.

In lieu of flowers, the family asked that memorials be made to the Claude H. Rhea Memorial Fund at the college.

Report on Atlanta meeting to be given in Jackson on Sept. 27

A Consultation of Concerned Baptists was held in Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 23-25. The meeting drew nearly 4,000 Southern Baptists who said they are concerned about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention.

On Thursday, Sept. 27, Mississippi Baptists will have an opportunity to hear a report on the Atlanta meeting. A fellowship/informational session will be held, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Empire Ballroom of the Ramada Coliseum (400 Greymont Ave.) in Jackson. Baptists from throughout the state are expected to be in attendance.

A panel composed of Tom Sims, Mary Jane Nethery, and Joe Tuten will speak, and respond to questions. These three were elected to the national steering committee at the Atlanta meeting, as Mississippi representatives.

Joe Tuten, former pastor of Jackson's Calvary Church, now in retirement in Jackson, will bring a closing message of inspiration.

This is not a dinner meeting; refreshments will be served. Further details may be obtained by calling Tuten in Jackson, 981-2411.

Exec Committee holds solemn assembly

By Mark Wingfield

NASHVILLE (BP) — Members of the Executive Committee began their fall meeting Sept. 17 with a three-hour solemn assembly that included public confession and repentance.

At several points in the assembly, individuals stood at microphones to confess specific sins and "turn over to God" burdens and issues of personal pride.

This was the first Executive Committee meeting since July 17 when two Baptist Press journalists were dismissed in a controversial, special-called meeting. Al Shackelford, vice president for public relations, and Dan Martin, news editor, were terminated.

Although the incident was never cited specifically, several Executive Committee members alluded to pain they have experienced since that meeting.

"I have had deep resentment against moderates who think we're stupid and can't discern God's will," one member said in an emotional testimony. "I want to be free of any resentment."

Another member said he believes there has been a spirit of oppression on the Executive Committee caused by critical words. "We did some things we thought were right. People have misunderstood," he said.

"We have to forgive every person who spoke every word against us," the man suggested. "We also must repent of words we have spoken."

"Forgive those who disagree with us," another member prayed.

At one point, members stopped to pray specifically for Executive Committee chairman Sam Pace, who one speaker said has taken the brunt of criticism for the committee's July actions. Pace is an associational director of missions in Oklahoma.

Another common theme in testimonies was a desire for unity among Executive Committee members.

One member said she feared being "shunned" by fellow conservatives more than being criticized by moderates. As a result of the solemn assembly, the member said, "I'm not going to be so cautious about who I eat with or who I talk to."

One man said he had developed resentment because people and news reports had repeatedly "lied" about him. However, he said he prayed Executive Committee members would "come to a complete giving up of self" and stop "backbiting."

"I know God will never move within us until fractured relationships are healed," another man said. "I think if any group of people in the Southern Baptist Convention is going to bring a sense of peace and wellness, it has to be us."

He said members of the Executive Committee have too often seen each other only as labels. "God can't use us until we get over that," the man declared.

The solemn assembly was led by Henry Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening with the SBC Home Mission Board. He was assisted by prayer leaders from three other agencies: T.W. Hunt and Avery Willis of the Sunday School Board; Minette Drumwright of the Foreign Mission Board; and Doug Beggs of the Brotherhood Commission.

Blackaby said the prayer leaders received a burden two years ago that led to a call to solemn assembly issued one year ago. Solemn assembly is an Old Testament concept of gathering people together for confession of corporate sin.

The past year has been "the deepest

year in our lives," Blackaby said. "Nothing can compare to what we've seen."

He reported that nine state conventions, dozens of associations, and hundreds of churches have called solemn assemblies in the past year. Solemn assembly has helped those groups stop looking at what they are doing for God and instead focus on what God is doing in the world, he said.

"God's holiness is being manifested in a new kind of way," Hunt reported. Revivals resulting from solemn assemblies are "characterized by the dread of God," he said.

Willis told the assembly America is "living under the judgment of God."

"It is not God's fault we're not all he wants us to be," Willis said. "What more could God have done for our nation and our convention than he has already done?"

Willis said he believes sometime around 1963 God "took away the hedge" of protection from America. He cited a string of statistics to show increased crime and immorality since that time.

"We stand in this moment of time, and we must respond to our God," he declared. "We need caretakers that will intercede before God for our nation and our convention. Prayer is the answer."

"I think God in his mercy and love has given us a second chance. We ought to be praying, 'God, give us one more year.'"

At the conclusion of the solemn assembly, Beggs led the group in a covenant of recommitment to God.

"Movements like this don't solve everything," Blackaby told the Executive Committee. "What comes out of here will be far more important than what went on here."

Wingfield writes for HMB.

Thursday, September 27, 1990

Devotional

The name of Jesus

By Irene Martin
Mark 16:15

As anyone who has ever been on a mission trip will tell you, it is an awesome and humbling experience. Particularly on one to a foreign country, you are made acutely aware of the command, "... Go ye into all the world ..."



Martin

The Baptist Record is a newspaper about missions. For instance, in last week's issue, 16 of the 37 articles were stories of foreign missions; and, in addition, there were all of the "local church" mission happenings.

So it was through the Baptist Record that I first learned of the Japan-Mississippi partnership evangelism campaign commemorating the 100th anniversary of Southern Baptist work in Japan.

I made my final decision to go; and even with very thorough orientation from the Foreign Mission Board and our own Convention Board beginning a year in advance, the closer the time came, the more butterflies I got. I began to get frantic — I tried to study the whole Bible lest someone should ask me the names of the 12 tribes and I wouldn't know — but, wait, what if they asked about Paul's missionary journeys (I never could get those straight); so I would turn to the New Testament and read, read, read. I was to go to Japan as kind of a floating pianist; knowing of the Japanese appreciation and knowledge of music, I practiced furiously. And my biggest apprehension of all was my feeling that I was just plain unworthy to go as a witness to a foreign country. What, I wondered, do missionaries do to feel worthy, or do they?

Then, one day, the book and tape of conversational Japanese phrases arrived and that almost did me in. But, I opened the book and the first word I saw was IESU. I was thrilled. I recognized the word as Jesus.

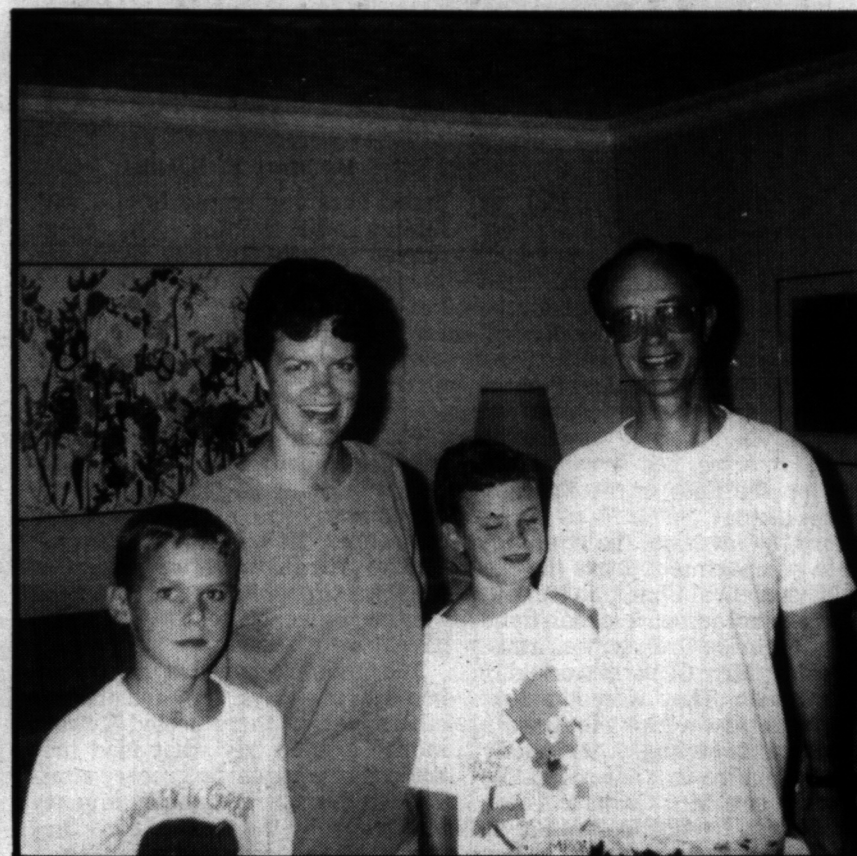
"I already know some Japanese," I thought. It was if a big light of affirmation came on. For in Europe, he is JESU or GESU; in Spanish, he is JESUS (Ha-sus); and in Japanese, IESU. I thought of Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever," — omnipresent; and I knew that, though the spelling and the pronunciation might be different, Jesus (Iesu) would be in Japan when I got there.

Two weeks before we left, my church had a commissioning service. My pastor prayed, "Give her a clear voice and steady fingers to witness for you." A calmness permeated my being and I realized that I was not going on a mission trip for what I could do, but what God could do through me.

Though I don't regret the intensified Bible study or the hours of practice, I couldn't help wondering what greater things God might have done had I received the calming assurance months earlier; for, indeed, I was used by God, as were we all — a fact borne out by the testimonies of 62 volunteers at the victory breakfast before we left Japan to come home.

It may be that God wants you to go as a volunteer missionary. You have read many similar personal accounts of mission trips in the Baptist Record. If he has called you, we can all attest to the fact and assure you that God will meet all your needs, obstacles will be removed, financing will be provided; and, especially, God will grant an extra portion of his indwelling power when you focus on JESUS, name above all names.

Martin is proofreader/secretary, the Baptist Record.



Southern Baptist workers Maurice and Laurie Graham and sons Aaron (left), 10, and Peter, 13, found faith, family and a sense of humor helped them cope while living in the U.S. embassy compound in Kuwait City. This snapshot, taken by an American who was a hostage with the Grahams, shows them inside a building on the compound. See story, page 6. (BP Photo.)

CLC board gives award to Colson

NASHVILLE (BP) — Trustees of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission voted 29-1 to present the agency's 1991 Distinguished Service Award to Charles "Chuck" Colson of Prison Fellowship Ministries.

Colson, 59, a former White House aide to ex-President Richard Nixon, was convicted and served seven months of a one-to-three year federal prison sentence after pleading guilty to a Watergate-related charge in 1974. Before going to prison, he expressed faith in Jesus Christ. After he was released from prison, Colson began a prison ministry that eventually took the title Prison Fellowship Ministries.

He became a Southern Baptist in 1977 when he joined Columbia Church in Falls Church, Va., where he is still a member.

A popular speaker in churches and other Christian gatherings, Colson is the author of eight books including such Christian best-sellers as *Born Again*, *Life Sentence*, and *The God of Stones and Spiders*.

Pastor angry his name on list

FRESNO, Calif. (BP) — A California pastor is angry that he has been named — without his permission — to an interim steering committee of the new SBC moderate fellowship. The fellowship has created a Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc., to receive and distribute funds from SBC churches to causes they support.

E.W. McCall Sr., pastor of St. Stephen Church in La Puente, Calif., told the California Southern Baptist, newsjournal of the California Southern Baptist Convention, he is "very concerned and disappointed" in the news article released by Baptist Press and printed in the California Southern Baptist.

"The article said I was nominated (the Baptist Press article said elected) to a 60-member steering

committee on Aug. 25. This same article implied I consented, and gave permission to be nominated to such a post. It further implied the label 'moderate' was one I ascribed to as a Southern Baptist. I want it to be known I have not contacted any person that would give this impression," McCall said.

McCall said he and the La Puente church intend to "remain with the SBC and continue our Cooperative Program participation."

"I have been aligned (in the action by the fellowship) with a movement that is totally opposed to my 'loyal Southern Baptist stance.' It is unethical to use a person's name without ever gaining his or her permission in such a controversial issue,"

he said. "It is so wrong, if this was the motive, to assume that because I am a Southern Baptist 'that happens to be black' that I am a moderate or liberal. I am theologically a conservative and anyone who knows me is aware of that fact."

The California newsjournal contacted Ron Sisk, pastor of Tiburon Church, north of San Francisco, who attended the Atlanta meeting and was a member of the nominating committee of the new fellowship.

Sisk said the committee tried to contact McCall and although they were unable to reach him, committee members felt confident in his willingness to serve. The committee had only about 24 hours to come up with nominations, Sisk said, and attempted to contact all those nominated.

East European students "soak up Bible"

BUDAPEST, Hungary (BP) — Students from nine Eastern European countries enrolled in the new International Baptist Lay Academy this past summer, and all soaked up the Bible-based training "like sponges," administrators said.

A near-capacity 110 students attended summer classes in Bible, English and Christian topics during the first three two-week sessions which opened July 1. The European Baptist Federation and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sponsor the school in cooperation with Hungarian Baptists.

The school, located on the campus of the Hungarian Baptist academy, provides basic Christian training to Baptist laypersons and bivocational pastors from throughout Eastern Europe. Students from every Eastern European country except Albania attended.

Classes are taught in English, to provide a common language to the varied language/culture groups represented. Christian materials are scarce in many Eastern European languages, so those wanting to study must do so in another language for now. The school provides intensive study of English.



SINGING LESSONS — In an impromptu singing session, Samuel Gallat of Czechoslovakia, at the keyboard, accompanies (from left to right) Nikolai Devyatkin of the Soviet Union; Maire Harvey of the United Kingdom; Christopher Kowalski of Poland; Reg Harvey, director of British Baptists' Mission Society from the United Kingdom; Aaron Summers, BSU summer missionary from Jackson, Tenn.; and Theodore Paul of Austria. The group is singing at the International Baptist Lay Academy in Budapest, Hungary, which provides basic Christian training to Baptist lay persons and bivocational pastors from throughout Eastern Europe. (BP Photo By Mike Creswell)

CLC

From page 3

vention for the commission to upgrade its Washington office.

Land said the new budget is divided into Washington and Nashville sections in order to help Southern Baptists keep track of where the agency's funds are being spent.

Commissioners approved a 10 percent cost-of-living salary adjustment for the agency's Washington program staff. Trustees also gave Nashville staff members salary increases averaging 2.45 percent.

The commission's literature sales

are "on the rebound significantly" following a steep decline during the 1987-89 period when the agency was undergoing transition following the election of a more conservative board of trustees and ensuing personnel changes, Louis Moore, associate director told trustees.

After hitting their lowest level in a decade in 1989, literature sales in 1990 will rebound to either the second or third highest year ever, depending on final tallies, Moore said. He said total literature sales for 1990 should exceed \$120,000, up from \$67,000 in 1989. He urged the trustees "to join the staff in doing everything possible to see that the rebound and increase continue."

DEFENSE

From page 3

religion" for every human being.

"We urge you to move as quickly as possible to remove or ameliorate the Saudi mail regulation which stands in the way of our service personnel's free exercise of religion," since the literature is "for personal use, not evangelistic distribution."

"... While we recognize the need to respect the cultural and religious heritage of the Saudis, we must also state unequivocally our firm support for the religious liberty and free exercise rights of our service personnel at a time in their professional service when they need to exercise those

rights the most."

Copies of the letter were delivered to two members of the U.S. Senate's armed services committee, Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), and ranking minority member John W. Warner (R-Va.); two members of the U.S. House of Representatives armed services committee, Chairman Les Aspin (D-Wis.), and ranking minority member William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.); and to Kenneth W. McFadden, an official in the U.S. Postal Service.

In addition, J. Brent Walker, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee, discussed the issue Sept. 17 with aides to Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), the ranking minority member of the Senate's foreign relations committee.

Grahams realize God's care during Kuwait ordeal

By Mary E. Speidel

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP) — Huddled on a mattress in a Kuwait City apartment, Laurie Graham hummed "God Will Take Care of You."

Iraqi soldiers in the room listened while she strummed a guitar and sang Christian tunes with her family and five Filipino friends. "They (the soldiers) didn't know what the lyrics were, but we did," said Mrs. Graham, a Southern Baptist worker in Kuwait.

Four times on Aug. 2, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, Iraqi soldiers entered the apartment where Mrs. Graham, her husband, Maurice, and their two sons were staying.

At one point, Mrs. Graham was so terrified she thought: "Just get me to a tiny town in Kansas . . . and I'll never leave." She is a native of Hutchinson, Kan. Her husband is from Shelbyville, Tenn.

"Before we went to Kuwait, that was one of the first times in my life I was willing to say, 'Here I am. I'm willing to do whatever,'" she said. Now that she's back on American soil, she said she still feels the same way.

Mrs. Graham and her sons, Peter, 13, and Aaron, 10, arrived in Raleigh, N.C., Sept. 13 aboard a Northwest Airlines charter flight from London. They were among about 290 American women and children who evacuated Sept. 12.

When Mrs. Graham stepped off the plane in Raleigh, she appeared calm and poised, carrying one suitcase and a briefcase. Her sons, tanned and wearing shorts and sports shirts, toted black backpacks on their shoulders. Their baggage contained the few possessions the Grahams managed to take from Kuwait.

But, like most of the other passengers, they left behind much more than personal belongings. They left Mrs. Graham's husband and the boys' father in the U.S. embassy compound in Kuwait City.

He is among a handful of Americans still at the embassy, where the family took refuge Aug. 6. "I don't know what's going to happen," said Mrs. Graham. "I feel good about the diplomatic process, but I really still feel we've got to wait it out."

While waiting for a Sept. 14 flight to Nashville, Mrs. Graham described her family's six-week ordeal in Kuwait. Nearby, her sons played games on the floor in the Raleigh-Durham airport.

Before the invasion, the Grahams lived in an apartment above the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait, where they had served less than three months. Maurice Graham was assistant pastor; Mrs. Graham worked in church music. They were the first Southern Baptist workers in Kuwait.

About 5 a.m. on Aug. 2, the family awoke to gunfire that "sounded like fireworks," said Mrs. Graham. Later, some Filipino friends took refuge in the Grahams' apartment. They reported gunfire had shattered the windows in the Grahams' car and that a bullet had pierced the rim of one tire.

The church and apartment are across the street from Kuwait's national assembly building, where some of the heaviest fighting occurred. Iraqi soldiers came in and out of the apartment during the day, wanting food, water, and a chance to watch television. As the day wore on, the Grahams decided it was not safe to stay in their home.

They called an American consul friend, whose wife told them to come to their home immediately. They grabbed the bags they had packed earlier and dashed downstairs with the Filipinos. Just yards away an Iraqi soldier was hot-wiring another car. As they drove away, "he didn't pay any attention to us," said Mrs. Graham.

The streets were filled with abandoned cars and empty busses with motors still running. The group prayed silently as they drove the 20-minute route to the embassy official's home. "There were troops everywhere. But it was as if angels were surrounding us," said Mrs. Graham, her voice breaking. "They (the soldiers) didn't even look at us."

When they arrived safely at the consul's home, they examined the damaged tire. A bullet had pierced the rim but narrowly had missed puncturing the rubber. "It was like a miracle," said Mrs. Graham. "If we had had to change a tire while we were leaving, who knows what attention we would have drawn."

The Grahams stayed at the consul's home for four days. They and about 20 others staying there pooled Kuwaiti money to help buy what food they could find in a nearby grocery store. The Grahams kept some emergency backpacks by the door in case they were rounded up by Iraqi soldiers.

On Aug. 6, embassy officials ordered all diplomatic families to the U.S. embassy compound. The Grahams went with the consul's family. When they arrived and officials learned Graham was a minister, someone said, "We can sure use your skills," Mrs. Graham recalled.

Their first night there, Graham was asked to lead a prayer service, which still continues nightly at the embassy. On Sundays, Graham leads worship services and serves communion twice a month.

Mrs. Graham, who led the singing, said she found comfort in the hymns they sang, though she had never been a fan of traditional hymns. "All the words were about distress and oppression, and I had never really been through anything where all I could do was rely on God to get me through," she said.

Besides leading worship, part of the

Grahams' Christian witness was in how they coped with the crisis. "I think it was really apparent to the people there that we were hanging on to something that was giving us a real inner peace," she said.

Maurice Graham had many opportunities to help others cope by using counseling skills honed while he was a chaplain at St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. In that role, he regularly helped families of dying children.

When embassy officials learned Graham was a trained counselor, they posted signs around the compound announcing his services. He also went periodically to the hotel across the street to counsel with British women and children held by Iraqi soldiers.

Graham also counseled with frightened expatriates who phoned in from outside the compound asking about evacuation flights from Kuwait.

Daily life at the embassy was comfortable before Iraqi soldiers cut electricity and water, Mrs. Graham said. One of the Graham boys told his parents, "You know if I didn't watch the news, I would think this was a great place," related Mrs. Graham. The children enjoyed day camp, swimming, playing table games, and watching videos with the other children at the compound.

Mrs. Graham said people at the embassy coped by working together as a team. "I've never seen people pitch in so willingly. That really helps the mental health and the morale of the group," she said.

But when electricity was cut off, the 120 degree weather made spirits sag. People tried to keep cool by taking frequent dips in the embassy pool. In the evenings, when temperatures cooled and meat was still available, families barbecued together by the pool. When the Grahams left the compound, Americans there were eating tuna

and rice.

The Grahams slept in wet T-shirts to try to stay cool. "If there's one thing we're looking forward to, it's ice," said Mrs. Graham during a press conference after arriving at Nashville International Airport Sept. 14, where a crowd of family and friends greeted her.

Throughout the ordeal, Mrs. Graham said her sons were not sheltered from what was happening. Before going to Kuwait, the Grahams had been Southern Baptist missionaries in Liberia for three years. They left Liberia for furlough before the country's civil war broke out, but the Graham boys followed the news about the war. Two days before Iraq invaded Kuwait, they read soldiers had massacred 600 people taking refuge in a church in Liberia.

The couple's openness with their sons helped them prepare for separation from their father, Mrs. Graham said. It has also helped the boys to know Graham's daily schedule at the embassy. "That's so much better than those who know nothing about their relatives," she said.

Throughout the ordeal, the family has found comfort from faith and family. Every night before bed, they talked about their questions and prayed together. "We found a great deal of strength in just being together as a family," she said.

Mrs. Graham said the experience has made her family stronger, even though they are concerned for Maurice's safety. "I've learned that it just doesn't do any good to sit around and worry about when is this going to get over with," said Mrs. Graham. "I've learned to put my whole trust in God. That's what's going to see you through."

Speidel writes for FMB.

Judgment, revival are SBC options, say prayer leaders

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP) — Southern Baptists either are headed for a final judgment from God or for the greatest revival they ever have experienced, according to national prayer leaders who spoke at the "Cedars of Lebanon," Aug. 31-Sept. 3.

To escape judgment and experience genuine spiritual awakening, God's people must become broken, repentant, and overwhelmed by the awesome holiness of God, prayer leaders told more than 350 people who attended the retreat at Mt. Lebanon Encampment near Dallas, sponsored by Texas Baptist Men organization.

God is "stirring the nest" of Southern Baptists and of the United States, said Avery Willis of the Sunday School Board.

Hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods experienced last year and the current crisis in the Middle East all are God's way of "trying to get our attention" and redirecting his people to himself, he said.

"God is trying to shake us up so we will hear him," Willis said. "God is stirring our nest and letting us down on the briars."

Before God can use Southern Baptists for his glory, they first must be broken, according to Don Miller of Bible-Based Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas. However, he added that God breaks his people to create something else out of the shattered pieces, not so

that they can remain broken.

"God wants to make something out of us. We dare not sit and moan and groan in our brokenness," said Miller. "The potential is too great."

As the bride of Christ, the church must be pure, faithful, and holy, according to T.W. Hunt of the Sunday School Board.

"There is a mystical purity that is already there," he said. "Practically, we have a long way to go."

In recent months, Hunt said he has been encouraged by meetings of Southern Baptists characterized by deep confession of sin and by total lack of awareness of time as God moved.

"I've seen people overwhelmed by God's dread holiness," he said. "God has taken the initiative in a profound way."

The pattern is not new, according to Richard Owen Roberts of International Awakening Ministries. Every Old Testament revival was preceded by a tragic moral and spiritual decline, by a righteous judgment from God, by the raising up of immensely burdened leaders and by some extraordinary act of God, he said.

Currently, the Southern Baptist Convention is under the remedial judgment of God, said Roberts, a Congregationalist minister serving the non-denominational Providence Chapel in Wheaton, Ill.

Remedial, corrective judgment is characterized by the "withdrawal of God's manifest presence," he said, and is a merciful act toward a disobedient people who still have the opportunity to repent. A final judgment, on the other hand, is when God strikes his people dead, and they have no opportunity left for repentance, he explained.

"God restrains his wrath by turning his back because he cannot gaze upon sin. We should be thankful God is withdrawn. Otherwise, we would not be here," Roberts said.

"God would have to cease to be holy to associate with an unholy people in a manifest fashion. God does not cause his face to shine on people in love with their sin."

God's people must truly repent based on their felt needs and on genuine understanding of God's holy nature, Roberts said.

"True biblical repentance provoked by godly sorrow is not a single act but a continuous activity," he said. "Repentance is not something once done, forever accomplished."

Roberts, who authored the definitive booklet on "solemn assemblies," warned Southern Baptists not to make the solemn assembly a "fad" or a "program." Based on an Old Testament practice, the solemn assembly is a time in which believers are called together for prayer, fasting,

confession of sin, and repentance.

Henry Blackaby of the Baptist Home Mission Board said Southern Baptists' national prayer leaders consciously have resisted all efforts to turn the solemn assembly into "just another program."

"There is a deep moving of God in our leadership, but most Southern Baptists have never heard of solemn assembly. We haven't gone far enough into solemn assembly to have corrupted it yet," he said.

Blackaby underscored Roberts' assertion that Southern Baptists are under God's remedial judgment, and the need for repentance is urgent.

"We've taken seriously what God has said to us — to hurry to the people called Southern Baptists and say, 'God has given us one more chance,'" he said. "What a tragedy it would be if our leaders did not recognize the judgment of God."

Blackaby said God's people must come to God's Word and allow God's Spirit to speak to them.

"That doesn't lead to an encounter with God. That is an encounter with God," he said, adding that believers must approach that encounter with a prior commitment to obey.

God wants to do a "new thing" among Southern Baptists if they will seek him in prayer, according to Willis.

"If you want to be in on what God is doing, don't watch the news. Go to

your prayer closet," he said.

The "new thing" will be initiated by God, he will interrupt his people and give them a vision to involve them in it, and he will instruct them as they go, Willis explained.

"When God sends a vision, it's probably unexpected, because it's not something you initiated. When God sends a vision, it's probably unappealing, because it's not something you would have chosen," he said. "When God sends his new thing, it may interrupt old traditions."

Persons receptive to the "new thing" from God should expect opposition from those who are not open to change, Willis said.

"The establishment always has a problem with God's new movement. They are ready for anything that will enhance their establishment, but not anything that will tear down their establishment," he said.

The "revival that is coming" among Southern Baptists will be bathed in prayer and based on God's word, Willis said. The fourfold message to be preached in that awakening movement will be the sovereignty of God, the lordship of Jesus Christ, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the repentance of God's people.

Camp is public relations, Texas Baptist Convention.



Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams



The Partridges in the Homochitto Valley

In the Homochitto Valley near Bude is a house called Covey Rest. The Partridges live there. "We gave it the wrong name," said Becky. "Seldom does anyone rest here!"

The Partridge farm on Berrytown Road produces berries — strawberries, blackberries, blueberries — plus peaches and grapes. Besides, the owners sell their own homemade jams and jellies. (I tasted the peach jam. Ummmm!) Labels on the jars picture a partridge designed by Becky, and a Bible verse such as "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, faith, patience, temperance, goodness" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Everyone in the family helps with jelly making, partly because Becky is in a wheelchair, due to "lower motor neuron disease," and partly because there's so much work to do! Her son, Bryan, chief farmer in the family, makes the gift baskets in which the jellies are packaged, shaping them as hearts or Christmas trees or perhaps as maps of Mississippi, Louisiana, or Alabama. Also Becky's husband, Charles, helps in various ways, as do her son Tim, daughter Deanna, and her mother, Annie Hathorne, who lives with them. They have already begun preparations for mailing Christmas baskets.

Four years ago, in a 747 over the Pacific, I watched Mildred Jenkins of Sallis piece a quilt square. When fellow passengers paused to look, too, she used their interest as a steppingstone to conversation about her faith in Christ. I mentioned this in one "Faces and Places" column. Soon afterward, Becky Partridge wrote from Rt. 3, Box 180, Meadville, Miss. 39653, saying "That statement about Mrs. Jenkins made me take another view of the crafts the Lord has given me the ability to do."

Her jelly labels are just one of the many ways she has found to witness through the work of her hands. In another artistic project, she correlated a cookbook published by her church, Mt. Zion in Franklin County. She did the cover and illustrations, plus several poems and recipes for Shared Blessings — Third Sunday (the church serves dinner on the ground third Sundays). Her mother even consented to let her secret biscuit recipe be included in the cookbook. The first edition of 800 sold



Rebecca Churchmouse can talk loud, and sometimes she does at Mt. Zion Church's VBS. Here she is talking to her creator, Becky Partridge, who also made Rebecca's puppet relatives, Grandma, Grandpa, Dog, Violet, and Ghost.

in China, Africa, and all over the U.S.; 1,000 more were ordered.

Her needlework, too, Becky has used as a tool for sharing. Puppets she made for her church have been an effective way to tell children more of Jesus and his teachings. At church, children have on occasion asked for a ride in her wheelchair, which she dubbed "the Lord's chariot."

In her living room, she has a wall hanging, a stitchery she named her "miracle piece." This won honorable mention in national competition sponsored by Good Housekeeping magazine. While it was under construction, she found she needed one more inch of the figured green fabric border — but no more was available. However, she kept sewing — and praying. When she sewed the final seam and turned the piece, she asked her husband to re-measure it. When he did, he said, "I can't believe this!" Now it was exactly the specified length!

"I don't think I won because my work was so good," Becky said, "but because God wanted me to have a chance to tell about it, and about his greatness."

Other of her crafts have provided object lessons for Vacation Bible

School. An associational youth worker, she in August, as usual, taught a teen group in Vacation Bible School at Mt. Zion. Except these youths call themselves not Vacation Bible school pupils, but Victory Bound Scouts (Victory — success in any struggle involving defeat of an opponent; Bound, headed for home, ready to go; Scouts — searching for information, finding the way). She showed them how to make fuzzy white bears with bottles of air freshener inside — to teach that "what matters most in the Christian's life is what is inside."

Her own teen days were spent in her native Jackson. Though she grew up in a Methodist home, she began attending Griffith Memorial Baptist Church with friends. Later, in Memphis, she made a profession of faith and was baptized at Bellevue Church. She studied at Enoch's Junior High, Central High, and Hinds Junior College. After she got cytology training at the University of Tennessee (now Memphis State) she worked for Bratley Lab in Jackson.

When her own children became teens, she said, was when she really began to grow as a Christian. "They said they were 'bored' with church and wanted to stop going. I had felt before then the Lord was leading me to teach young people, but I had refused. Now he said to me, 'OK, if you don't teach, then your children will stop going to church.'" So she began teaching young people, including her own, to try to make the Bible study more interesting for them.

Tuesday nights now she teaches a Bible study for youths. When she permitted them to choose the first subject for study, they said, "Revelation," thinking she would say no. But she agreed, and they studied that book a year and a half.

Her handcraft shows have sometimes led to invitations to speak at women's luncheons and senior citizens' clubs, to give her testimony (phone 532-6616).

Said her pastor, Marvin Howard, "She is always cheerful, always willing to serve in any way. I have never heard her complain about being in a wheelchair. In fact, she feels that it gives her an opportunity for ministry she might not have had otherwise, for it has opened doors for her. Her spiritual growth is very constant."

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BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

Three decades of war refine Ethiopian Church

By Donald D. Martin

ROCKVILLE, Va. (BP) — Twenty-nine years of civil war have impoverished much of Ethiopia, yet the war has tempered and strengthened the evangelical church, a Southern Baptist foreign missionary said.

"In Ethiopia you find a refined church — a tested church," said Paul Gay of Cuthbert, Ga., during a conference at the Southern Baptist Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va.

Gay, his wife, Hannah, of Jackson, Miss., and their two children are on a 10-month furlough from Ethiopia.

Tragic events in the war not only tested Baptist churches, but often helped them flourish, he said. Late last year rebels overran parts of northern Shoa Province where Southern Baptist missionaries were working with 10 Baptist churches. The rebels' offensive forced missionaries to evacuate to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. Contact with the young churches, nine of them less than two years old, was almost completely severed.

After several months, surprising news from the churches began trickling into Addis Ababa. "Something tremendous was happening," Gay said. People in rebel-controlled communities were astonished that the churches remained open after missionaries departed. Some in the communities had assumed church members were only attending to glean benefits from the mission, he said. "Their (the northern Shoa churches') credibility really took a leap," he said.

"After we had been gone for three or four months, and the churches were still meeting, people in the communities began to say, 'Well, there may be something more to this.' People who had stood on the sidelines watching finally became impressed with the changes they saw."

In four months, the membership of several churches grew by 50 percent. "This is exciting to us. It's like getting mid-term exam results and finding

out you've been on track — you've been following the professor," Gay said.

The Baptist mission has also received government approval of a proposed development project 80 miles southeast of Addis Ababa, where no evangelical work exists, Gay said. The three-year Minjar/Shenkora project will help provide basic living needs for 83,000 people living in the rural area.

The project will furnish area residents with clean water, nutritional education, improved animal breeding, and veterinary services. Project directors also hope to reverse the area's severe soil erosion by distributing 3 million seedlings in three years. "This project will improve people's lives in so many ways that we haven't even imagined," Gay said.

One of the greatest improvements for all of Ethiopia would be an end to fighting. It has claimed more than 400,000 lives. More than a million people died of starvation in 1984-85 as well.

Recent signs indicate the war is drawing to an end. News reports from Addis Ababa say it is only a matter of months before President Mengistu Haile Mariam loses control of the country to the two largest guerrilla groups. Rebels of the Tigre People's Liberation Front, fighting to topple Mengistu's 16-year-old government, have pushed to within 150 miles north of the capital.

Farther north in the Eritrea province, secessionist rebels of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) have trapped 120,000 Ethiopian soldiers in Asmara, the provincial capital, a city of one million people. The defeat comes months after Eritreans won control of the vital Red Sea port of Massawa, thus closing Ethiopia's second largest port. The EPLF is fighting for independence of the province annexed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1962.

Martin writes for FMB.

Student decisions reflect conference emphasis on evangelism

NASHVILLE — More than 650 public decisions during student conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta Baptist conference centers reflect the conferences' emphases on missions service and caring about others, said Charles Johnson, director of the Student Ministry Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Students attending the two conferences, held simultaneously at the two conference centers Aug. 11-17, made 652 public decisions during evening worship services.

The decisions included 21 professions of faith in Jesus Christ, 183 com-

mitments to Christian vocations, 249 rededications and 199 other decisions, according to Student Ministry Department records. Registration for the two conferences was 4,058.

Johnson said evangelism would continue to be a theme of student work throughout this academic year. The theme for state student conventions this fall, "Chosen and Called," again "gets into evangelism."

He said the student conferences at Ridgecrest and Glorieta launched "a year of lifting up the idea that students are chosen and called to do God's service."

Missionary news

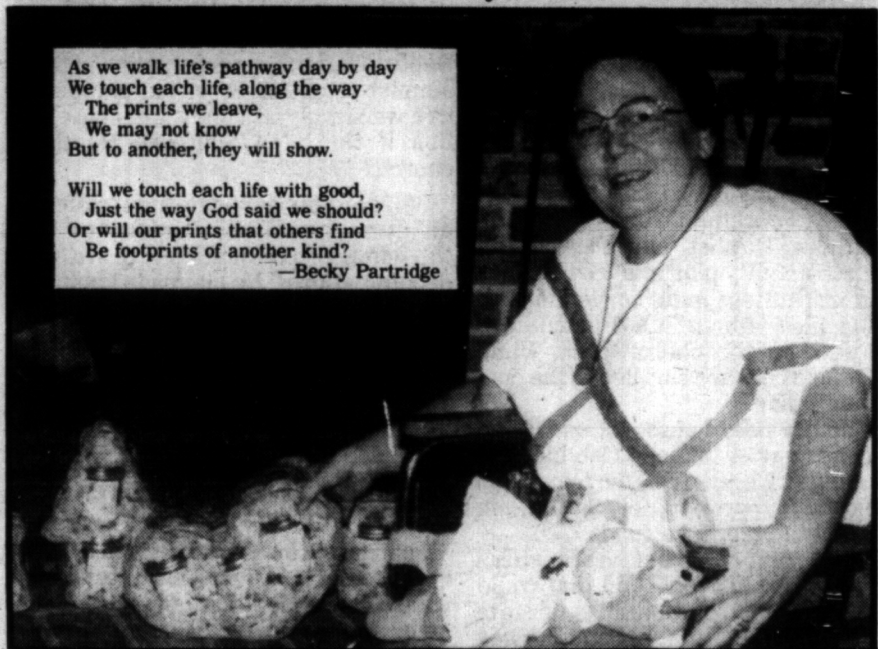
Robert and Donna Leonard, missionaries to Brazil, are in the States (address: 15423 Avenue "C", Channelview, Texas 77530). He was born in Buffalo, N.Y., and considers Pompano Beach, Fla., his hometown. The former Donna Cralle, she was born in Graham, Texas, and considers Jackson her hometown.

Glenn and Pat Bien, missionaries to Bangladesh, are in the States (address: Rt. 4, Box 149, Coldwater, Miss. 38618). He was born in Memphis, Tenn., and considers Independence his hometown. She is the former Patricia McElhaney of Coldwater.

As we walk life's pathway day by day
We touch each life, along the way
The prints we leave,
We may not know
But to another, they will show.

Will we touch each life with good,
Just the way God said we should?
Or will our prints that others find
Be footprints of another kind?

—Becky Partridge



Becky Partridge points out some of the baskets her son, Bryan, made to package Partridge farm jellies. Bryan also does woodwork. Becky's other son, Tim, does leatherwork, and her daughter, Deanna, does graphic design in her job with McComb Printing. Becky designed the labels for the baskets; each contains a Scripture verse.

Calvary Chapel on its way — with help of state missions

By Joe Young

Churches are often reluctant to start a mission. There is a feeling that the sponsoring church must be large and financially secure.

By that philosophy of missions, Parks Church in Tallahatchie County shouldn't be starting a mission. Only 26 is the average in Sunday School; the weekly budget is \$300 per week.

Thirty years ago this small Delta church was a mission in an unchurched area. Today, not much larger, it has established a mission nine miles away in another Delta town with no church of any denomination — the staff community at Parchman. Calvary Chapel has now operated for four months at Parchman, the result of several years of ministry there by Parks Church.

How does a church like Parks sponsor a mission?

They step out in faith that God will lead Baptist people, who helped them 30 years ago to become a church, to now join them in carrying out the same Great Commission. They step out in faith that even as they have contributed to Southern Baptist causes over the years, Southern Baptists will contribute to this one.

Parks began the work with \$100 for an electrical hook-up. Land and the remnants of a building were donated. Services were held for eleven weeks without a roof — without a raindrop in the wettest spring in years.

Then a \$600 check came from Mississippi Baptists.

As Parks treasurer, Bondy Holland, received the check during the morning service on July 1, he told the people: "This is the difference between Southern Baptists and independent Baptists. We work together. We cooperate in the Lord's work. Many of us are saved today because of mission work here at Parks. I was saved because Tallahatchie Baptists and

Webb Baptist Church cared and started Parks Mission. Now we're still a small church, but we're getting support in starting Calvary from Baptists across our state. We're seeing once again, first-hand, what our missions dollars have been doing the last 30 years."

That \$600 gift from Mississippi Baptists, added to offerings at the mission, and to the volunteer labors from people across the Delta, had a roof over the first 720 square feet of the building by July 14. That day, record heat broke and workers enjoyed the 78-degree temperatures.

The next week volunteers from Boyle Church in Bolivar County helped with a Backyard Bible Club that enrolled 53 children. One profession of faith was recorded, and total enrollment was 78.

Parks applied for \$2500 from this year's state missions offering for church building aid. But by mid-

August Parks cancelled the request for help at Calvary Chapel. In one week the church received \$4,300, in unsolicited gifts. A Sunflower County church, West Drew, sent \$800 (Parks had aided them financially several years ago), and an anonymous donor channeled \$3,500 through the Baptist Foundation for the new mission.

September 8 was another workday at Calvary, Parchman. Once again, Wright Metal Buildings of Drew loaned its crane to lift heavy materials to the roof. And once again, as in July, the Lord led the heat break for one day while workers got back to the task. Volunteer staff from the Parchman maintenance crew, First Church, Tutwiler and Parks members joined to almost complete the roof. Now work can begin on winterizing the building. It still has no windows or doors.

Help has come from every direction, even before anyone had time to



Workmen place roof trusses atop Calvary Chapel at Parchman. State mission dollars helped to finance the project.

ask. A number of Bolivar County Association churches have donated building materials and church furniture. Even the Cleveland Church of God sent a pulpit, communion table, and two pews. Presbyterians and Methodists have given their labors, too.

How has the mission work progressed? Only a handful of Parchman staffers actually attend. Other staffers have been willing to help with con-

struction. Calvary's greatest needs are prayer support and workers in visitation and teaching. Growth is slow, but new doors open almost daily.

Meanwhile, the folks at Parks Church, Drew, and Calvary Chapel, Parchman, are promoting state missions. They've set their highest goal ever for the offering. They want a part in helping start other new work in Mississippi.

Young is Parks pastor.

New kits will aid evangelism efforts

NASHVILLE — A resource kit to help Southern Baptist churches coordinate plans for a new emphasis, Evangelism Day in the Sunday School, will be released in October as the first of a series of kits dealing with evangelism and enrollment.

The kit, "Share Christ's Love," will provide planning suggestions for the first annual Evangelism Day in the Sunday School, March 31, 1991.

The emphasis allows churches to coordinate Sunday School and worship service activities to relate specifically to evangelism, explained Wayne Etheridge, growth consultant in the board's Sunday School division and writer of the 1991 kit.



When the Parks Church congregation voted to sponsor Calvary Chapel, they learned that their roofless building had been donated. It lies southeast of Parchman.



Calvary Chapel met for "ground breaking" on June 3, Pentecost Sunday, in the roofless building, just after a deluge of rain. Thirty-three attended.

28 International Service Corps Self forms annuity company

RICHMOND, Va. — The Foreign Mission Board, SBC, named 18 people to attend a Sept. 12-27 orientation and then work overseas through its International Service Corps program.

In addition, the board has chosen 10 other participants in its ISC program who will go to the field exempt from orientation because of previous overseas experience.

Those with Mississippi connections are:

Clay Moss: Most recently employed as pastor of Tammany View Church, Lewiston, Idaho. Current address: 1305 Old Highway 49 South, Richland, Miss. 39218. Education: Mississippi College, B.S. '89. Church: Tammany View. Hometown: Tuscaloosa, Ala. Assigned as a recreation program ministry worker in Malawi for two years.

Vicki (Mrs. Clay) Moss: Most recently employed as a laboratory technician for Intermountain Pool and Spa, Lewiston, Idaho. Current address: 1305 Old Highway 49 South, Richland, Miss. 39218. Education:

Hinds Junior College (now Hinds Community College), Raymond, Miss., A.A.S. '85. Church: Tammany View Baptist, Lewiston. Hometown: Richland, Miss. Assigned as a church and home outreach ministry worker in Malawi for two years.

Charles Whaley: Most recently employed as a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan for 40 years before retiring in 1989. Current address: 2687 Rangewood Drive, Atlanta, Ga. 30345. Education: Mississippi College, B.A. '44; Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., B.D. '47, Th.M. '48, D. Min. '77. Church: Briarlake, Atlanta. Assigned as a theological education worker in Japan for two years.

Lois (Mrs. Charles) Whaley: Most recently employed as a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan for 41 years before retiring in 1989. Current address: 2687 Rangewood Drive, Atlanta, Ga. 30345. Education: Mercer University, A.B. '48. Church: Briarlake, Atlanta. Assigned as a church and home outreach ministries worker in Japan for two years.

Taiwan Baptists celebrate library

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Baptists in Taiwan celebrated the dedication of the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary's new library during recent ceremonies. The three-story, split-level library will seat 100 people, com-

pared to a seating capacity of 35 in the old structure. The new library offers space to house 60,000 books, almost double the current collection. The seminar raised all building funds from Taiwan Baptists.

ATLANTA — The formation of a new annuity and trust company by former Atlanta pastor William Self is only "indirectly" related to the formation of a new fellowship of moderate Southern Baptists 10 days earlier, Self says.

Self, who resigned as pastor of Wieuca Road Church in Atlanta in August, announced Sept. 4 he will head Stoneworth Annuity and Trust in Atlanta. The company will specialize in individual retirement funds and charitable remainder trusts, a form of donating large sums of money to charitable causes.

Less than two weeks earlier, more than 3,000 Southern Baptists gathered in Atlanta to form a new fellowship for churches and individuals who consider themselves cut off by current denominational leadership. The group approved a new funding mechanism for missions but stopped short of creating a new convention.

"I think it is only coincidental," Self said of the comparison between his organization and the new Baptist fellowship. "I was in Europe and did not even know about the meeting in Atlanta being scheduled before I returned."

However, Self did return in time to attend the meeting.

He does not anticipate the new fellowship creating a formal connection with Stoneworth Annuity and Trust, although that is "not

unrealistic" for the future, he said. "I think they're a long way from adopting an annuity group exclusively."

Self's interest in the annuity business pre-dates the controversy that has divided Southern Baptists, he said. "I have letters on file that I wrote back in the mid-1980s about these issues."

Regardless, Self's announcement puts a new twist on a joke told across the SBC through the decade of controversy. Pastors have frequently quipped, "If the convention splits, I'm going with the Annuity Board."

The Annuity Board, based in Dallas, handles retirement funds for 20,028 Southern Baptist churches in its church annuity plan and 288 agencies and institutions in its convention annuity plan. About 35,000 people are enrolled in the church plan, while another 31,000 are enrolled in the convention plan.

Annuity Board assets at end of the second quarter totaled \$2.9 billion, including \$2.8 billion related to pension funds and approximately \$97 million related to insurance funds.

The Annuity Board serves Southern Baptists exclusively. And that could pose a problem if churches or state convention institutions move away from alignment with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Any church that withdraws from the Southern Baptist Convention would no longer be eligible to par-

ticipate in Annuity Board programs, said Thomas Miller, spokesman for the Annuity Board. "The Annuity Board receives only Southern Baptist money," he said.

However, the determination of what is "Southern Baptist money" is left to the state conventions, Miller explained. "The state convention office determines when a church is a Southern Baptist church for participation in the annuity program. From our perspective we simply ask the state convention if this is a Southern Baptist church."

Self said his new enterprise offers an alternative that is "untouched by the winds of political change within denominations." He claims to know of no other annuity program for ministers that is not related to some denomination.

"There is a lot of anxiety about all programs across denominational levels because of the unstable nature of most denominational structures," he said. "That relates to more than just the Baptist issues."

Self claims he is filling a void in the market that has existed for years and transcends denominational lines. But he plans to concentrate on the group he knows best — Southern Baptists.

"There seems to be a market here," Self said. "Only 50 percent of our churches and staff are in the Annuity Board."

Just for the Record

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Pleasant Hill Church, Ashland (Benton-Tippah) held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new education building, July 1. The building's cost will be approximately \$30,000. Jeff Ginn is pastor.



Acteens at First Church, Collinsville, were pinned by their mothers in a recent ceremony. Pictured, left to right, standing are Boo Boatner, Marsha Boatner, Carolyn Joyner, Clariene Duncan, Brenda Brannum, Molly Gammil, Kathy McKay, Karen Fortenberry, Darlene Mayette, Marie Hinson, Acteen leader, and Diane White, assistant Acteen leader. Kneeling are Sha Boatner, Wende Joyner, Stacy Duncan, B. J. Brannum, Angie Peppers, Mandy McKay, DeeDee Fortenberry, LeeAnn Gunn, Misty McElhaney, and Jessica White. David Sellers is pastor.



Emmanuel Church, Grenada (Grenada) recently performed a WMU service project, serving sandwiches and snacks to the BSU at the Grenada campus of Holmes Junior College. Those who participated are, front row, left to right, Isa Mae Boshers, Bea Collins, Nannie Holloway, back row, Mattie Ray, Thelma Roberts, Anita Alred, and Stella Aven.



Hickory Church children's choir presented "The Greatest Show on Heaven and Earth" during chapel services at Clarke College, Sept. 5. The choir, under the direction of Marian Thornton, minister of music at Hickory Church, portrayed the Ding-A-Ling Circus in a scriptural presentation.



Petal-Harvey Church, Petal (Lebanon) recently held a Sunday School leadership appreciation banquet to recognize departments and class leaders. Those pictured are, left to right, Tommy Strickland, Sunday School director; Bobby and Lori Davidson, evangelism award recipients; Verna Smith, ministry award recipient; Billie Buckley, recipient of the growth award and the Sunday School Class of the Year award; Ocie Wilson, recipient of the 50 Years of Distinguished Service award; and Wendell Frazier, minister of education.

Monroe Association Hymnfest 1990 was held Aug. 13 at First Church, Amory. The guest music director was Hugh McElrath, professor of church music at Southern Seminary. Special music was provided by the handbell choir of First Church, Aberdeen, and the associational choral choir. Sherelyn Gregg was the pianist and James Allen, organist. Pictured, from left, are Rick Spencer, director of missions of Monroe Association; Billy W. Bowie, associational music director; McElrath; and Danny Jones, consultant, associational church music, MBCB.



First Church, Jackson held its Run for the Son in August, boasting over 650 participants in the 5K run, the 5K walk, and the one-mile Fun Run. Ninety volunteers were required to bring about the success of the event, which donated food item proceeds to the Crestwood Mission Center.

Star Church, Star, Sun., Sept. 30, 4 p.m.; dedication of remodeled educational space and fellowship hall; open house and a fellowship meal after service; Mr. and Mrs. David Grant, special guests.

Gum Grove Church, Brookhaven, will honor Homer Case for 40 years of service as director of the music ministry in the 11 a.m. service on Sept. 30. There will be a reception for Case in the new fellowship hall from 2-4 p.m. A final singspiration service led by Case will be held at 6:45 p.m. Sammy J. McDonald III is pastor.

Lula Church, Jackson, will host Steve Smith, his wife, Vidonia, and their three girls, Sept. 30. The Smiths have been serving as missionaries in Argentina and are home on furlough. Before going to the mission field Lula was his first church to serve as pastor. Smith will bring the morning message at 11 and show slides of their work in Argentina for the evening service at 6. Mrs. Smith will share with the WMU ladies at 4:45 p.m.

Guy Mitchell will be honored for his years of service at Carmel Church, Monticello, Sunday, Sept. 30. Mitchell has been a member at Carmel Church for over 60 years, having served as church clerk for 37 years, deacon, and Sunday School teacher. Regular morning services are scheduled with dinner being served at the church followed by an afternoon service of recognition and singing. Johnny Sykes is pastor.

Winston Association, Louisville, will hold a World Missions Conference, Oct. 28 through Nov. 4. Conference sessions will be held Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., and each weeknight at 7 p.m. Twenty-four churches will participate. Missionaries to be featured will include: Susan Puckett, foreign missionary, Taiwan; Russell and Annette Herrington, foreign missionaries, El Paso, Texas; Roger and Penny Stacey, foreign missionaries, Brazil; Harold Manahan, home missionary, Nebraska; Johnny Boggan, home missionary, Michigan; Mickey Mayfield, home missionary, Georgia; Roy Williams, home missionary, Alaska; Caley and Marie Nichols, former home missionaries, Montana; Leon Emory, former director, Cooperative Missions, MBCB, Jackson; Ray Grissett, director, Cooperative Missions, MBCB, Jackson; and Don Wilson, consultant, Associational Missions, MBCB, Jackson.



North Winona Church, Winona, held its first annual homecoming services, July 15, with a former pastor, Leon Ballard bringing the message. The afternoon was filled with singing presented by two local groups; Bethsaida Singers and the Gloryland Singers. Frank Bishop is pastor.

The Gospel Messengers Quartet will present a musical program at **Terry Road Church, Jackson**, Sunday, Sept. 30th, 7 p.m. James Netherland is music director. Henry Bennett is pastor.

A gospel sing will be held Sept. 30 at 6 p.m. featuring the **Broken Vessels Quartet** from Morton. The sing will be sponsored by **Southern Hills Church, Jackson**. The public is invited. There will be no admission fee.

Baptist Young Women from across Mississippi are invited to attend the annual BYW Retreat at Camp Garaywa in Clinton, Oct. 12-13.

The featured guest will be **Gwen Williams**, home missionary from New Orleans, who will lead music for the weekend as well as share about her work in New Orleans.

BYWs will also participate in fellowship, a campfire, and small group conferences during the retreat.

The cost for the weekend is \$21 per person. Call 968-3800 by Oct. 10.

Homecomings

Standing Pine Church, (Leake): Sept. 30; 10:30 a.m., lunch served in fellowship hall following worship service; Joe Ratcliff, speaker; David Grumbach, pastor.

Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth (Alcorn): God and Country Day and homecoming; Sept. 30; services 10:30 a.m.; fellowship meal following; Kara Blackard, pastor.

First Church, Fulton (Itawamba): Sept. 30; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; services at 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds and an afternoon of gospel music; guest speaker will be Leroy Grissom, former pastor; Martin Hayden, pastor.

First Church, Fulton (Itawamba): Sept. 30; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; services, 11 a.m.; followed by dinner on the grounds and an afternoon of gospel music; Leroy Grissom, former pastor, guest speaker; Martin Hayden, pastor.

Cambridge Church, Gautier (Jackson): Sept. 30; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner in fellowship hall, noon; afternoon singing, 1 p.m.; no night services; Clark McMurray, Pascagoula, guest speaker; C. D. Faggard will be on program to honor the charter members; Paul F. Hard, pastor.

Clarke offers Bible interpretation class for adults

Clarke College will offer an adult continuing education class this fall on how to interpret the Bible. The class will be offered on five Thursday evenings in October and November (Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, and Nov. 1), 7:00-8:30 p.m., in the Fine Arts Building at Clarke College.

Since it will not be offered for college credit, the cost will be \$50.00 per person. Additionally, the textbook will be approximately \$13.00. For those who have never taken a course at Clarke College, there will be a \$15.00 registration fee. The course will be taught by John E. Dent Jr., professor of Greek and New Testament at Clarke.

Everyone is welcome to attend this class, regardless of formal education background, says the teacher. For more information, contact John E. Dent Jr., phone 683-3941.

Revival dates

Shiloh Church, Corinth: Sept. 30-Oct. 5; Sunday, 11 a.m.; 7 p.m., evening services; Ed Gandy, director of missions, Alcorn Association, evangelist; Guy Curtis, song leader; Billy Beckett, pastor.

Dorsey Church, Mantachie: Sept. 30-Oct. 4; 7 p.m. nightly; Wayne Vandiver, evangelist; ICC - BSU in charge of music; Jerry Estes, pastor.

New Ireland Church, Union (Newton): Sept. 30-Oct. 3; 7 p.m. nightly; Gus Merritt, Clarke-Venable Church, Decatur, evangelist; Gerald Simmons, Calvary Church, Columbia, music; Donald R. Silkwood, pastor.

New Hope Church (Oktibbeha): Sept. 30-Oct. 5; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Edd Holloman, evangelist; Kenny Hodges, music; Jerry East, pastor.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW SCHEDULE

Raymond Road Baptist Church, Jackson, will begin a new schedule, Sunday, October 7. Sunday School — 9:00 Worship 10:00-11:00

"Go and tell the Good News! Do it now."

By Jim Smith

Mark 5:1-20; John 15:26-27; Psalm 40:1-11;
1 John 1:1-2

The story of the Gadarene demoniac is familiar to many of us. However, we should never allow the familiarity to diminish our sense of awe at the compassion and power exhibited by Jesus in this encounter. We have here a striking example of two important elements we see over and over again in the life of Christ: First, we see the "social" ministry of Jesus as he first met the physical, mental, and, yes, the social needs, of the man possessed by demons. Second, we see that no matter the state of a person in the eyes of men, no matter the apparent "uselessness," Jesus can work miracles of healing (physical, mental, and spiritual) to make a useful, productive Christian of even the most vile individual. So often we forget that man looks on the outside and makes his judgement while Jesus is



Smith

LIFE AND WORK

able to look into the heart.

We see in Mark 5:18-20 that the man wanted to attach himself permanently to the Savior who had healed him physically, mentally, and spiritually. We also see that Jesus had a mission for him that did not include experiencing all the miracles of Jesus, hearing all the teaching of Jesus, or even learning vast amounts of scripture. The man had all he needed to be a witness for Christ and that is the mission Jesus had for him. That is the mission he has for each Christian.

When we look at the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, I believe we cannot deny the mission of all Christians to be witnesses for Jesus Christ. This being the case, let us examine the witness provided the demoniac. What did he have to tell his family and friends? He, as well as many others, knew what his life was like before Jesus came into his life and "saved" him. There can be little doubt that the man needed

Jesus in his life. He needed help and probably sought it before being cast out by society. He gained firsthand knowledge by his own personal experience with Jesus Christ. He knew he could tell the story better than anyone else because he had experienced it. Finally, he was able to tell others what it means to have Jesus come into your life. He was able to tell what Jesus had done for him.

I find that Christians are often afraid to go out and witness to a stranger. But we can and should start at home with our loved ones who know us best and are better able to see the change Jesus has wrought in our lives.

Many people are afraid to go out because they lack the strength and courage.

John tells us that the Holy Spirit is given to us to comfort us, to strengthen us, to empower us, to guide us in the truth, to testify of Jesus, and to recall to memory the teaching and ministry of Christ. The Holy Spirit can empower us (if we allow him to) that we may be witnesses for Christ to a lost and dying world.

But what are we to say? Certainly that which we know about God, as is indicated in Psalm 40:9-10. What we have learned, what the Holy

Spirit has revealed to us, and most certainly what we have experienced ourselves. Just as with the man possessed by demons, if you have had a personal experience with Jesus Christ you have all you need to be his witness. People may argue over opinions, people may argue over the proper interpretation or application of scripture, but they cannot argue against what you and you alone have personally experienced. Neither can they argue against what you know Jesus is doing in your life today. We should always study and prepare to be better able to give testimony for Jesus, but if you have had that personal experience you are never lacking in something to share with others.

We must bear witness. We are saved to do so and commanded by God to declare him before men (the world). It is not how much scripture you know. It is not the degree of sensationalism involved in your conversion. It is rather your desire and your willingness to "go" that makes a successful witness. If you will go, Jesus will provide the when, where, what, why, and how of witnessing. Trust him! Obey him! Go and tell someone today.

Smith is pastor, Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian.

Having the courage of your convictions

By Bob Rogers

1 Kings 22:13-16, 19-23, 26-28

Fred Craddock tells of a young minister who was called to a new church and was enjoying a barbecue in the backyard of the pulpit committee chairman. "You can't imagine what a thrill it is to come to a church and know that you've been elected by unanimous vote," he said. The fellow flipping the hamburgers said, "Well, it was practically unanimous." The alarmed preacher then asked the exact vote and got the chairman to admit it was 234-2. "I wonder who the two are," thought the preacher.



Rogers

He spent the next six months trying to find out who the two were, and then another six months trying to please those two. At the end of the year, he was fired. The vote was two in favor of keeping him, and 234 against. That preacher was a victim of the human desire to be liked by everybody. The prophet Micaiah stood in stark contrast to that kind of thinking in this lesson.

King Ahab of Israel had been at peace with Syria for three years, but Syria's ruler Ben-hadad had refused to live up to the terms of a

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treaty (1 Kings 20:34) and return to Israel Ramoth-gilead, a border town which controlled some important caravan routes. Ahab enlisted King Jehoshaphat of Judah to go to war with him against Syria. Jehoshaphat agreed, and then as an afterthought asked for a word from the Lord's prophets. Ahab assembled 400 of his court prophets who prophesied victory, but the king of Judah wanted to hear from a prophet who spoke independently. The king of Israel reluctantly called in Micaiah (vss. 1-12).

Micaiah was put under tremendous pressure to tell the kings what they wanted to hear. Four hundred prophets were all shouting, "Victory!" The messenger who called in Micaiah urged, "Let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them" (vs. 13). This is what society attempts to do to the Christian witness. It wants Christians to conform to its values and customs. It scorns the "religious fanatic." It accuses the church of hypocrisy and self-righteousness when the church stands against the world.

Micaiah swore an oath, saying, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak" (vs. 14). Over 800 years later, Peter and John were arrested for preaching that there is

salvation in no one else but Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12); and when they were told not to preach Jesus, they replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Surprisingly, when Micaiah first spoke to the kings, he told them that they would "prosper" (vs. 15). He probably used a sarcastic tone of voice and quoted the precise words of the 400 prophets of Ahab in derision, for the king instantly recognized that it was not really God's message, and implored Micaiah to speak "that which is true in the name of the Lord" (vs. 16).

To this Micaiah described two visions. The first was of a defeated Israel scattered "as sheep that have not a shepherd" (vs. 17). The second vision explained how the 400 prophets could contradict Micaiah's prophecy of defeat. He saw the Lord on his throne in heaven asking, "Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?" (vs. 20) After several suggestions, a "spirit" proposed that he would do it by being "a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets" (vs. 22). Micaiah explained that the prophets contradicted him because God had put this lying spirit (Satan?) in their mouths (vs. 23). It may trouble us that God would encourage someone to lie, but we must understand that ancient Israelites saw everything as being caused by God, both good

and evil. It was not revealed until the New Testament that God is only the author of good (James 1:13-17), and that while God permits evil in the world, he intends to use evil for good (John 9:1-3).

The king ordered Micaiah to be thrown into prison and live on bread and water, "until I come in peace" (vs. 27). Micaiah knew that the test of a true prophet was whether his words come true (Deuteronomy 18:20-22), so if Ahab came back in peace, "the Lord hath not spoken by me" (vs. 28). First Kings 22:29-37 showed how the Lord did speak through Micaiah.

It was not easy to stand for the truth. Micaiah was imprisoned for it. Christians may suffer for it, too (2 Timothy 3:12); but Christ calls courageous men and women who, like Micaiah, will not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 12:2).

Questions to consider:

1. Whom do you most want to please? God or man?
2. Is everybody who claims to speak for God really his spokesperson? How can you differentiate between a true and false prophet?
3. In what situations might you suffer for the truth? Are you willing to suffer for Christ?

Rogers is pastor, Calvary Church, Gloucester.

Success and failure contrasted: God is the difference

By Lannie Wilbourn

1 Samuel 30:1-2; 17-18; 31:1-7

Bad things do happen to God's people but, does that always mean failure? No, not any more than it means success when good things happen to bad people. The bad things in the life of God's people can be faith-builders if we turn to God for guidance through them. The good things in the life of bad people can be the opportunity to turn to God if rightly received. In *Companions on the Inner Way*, Morton Kelsey wrote, "If we read the Old Testament only through the eyes of Western materialism, we will not see much of what is there." That definitely applies to these last two chapters of 1 Samuel where David succeeds when he should have failed and Saul failed when he should have succeeded.



Wilbourn

David was an alien living in the Philistine city of Ziklag. He was an outlaw running from King Saul of Israel. His loyalty to God was demonstrated through raids against the enemies of Israel. Upon returning from one of these raids with his 600 soldiers David discovered that their old enemies, the Amalekites, had raided Ziklag. All the women and children had been taken captive,

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presumably to be sold as slaves in Egypt.

Now keep in mind that David's soldiers were not serving with the highest motives. They were the debtors and discontents of Israel who hoped for a better life under David. The loss of their families touched off a rebellion. They wanted to stone David. His family had been captured also and his grief was as great as that of his men. But, since he was the leader, David was still held responsible. He was risking his life and the safety of living in Philistia by going on the raids. As anointed, but unenthroned, king he was doing what seemed to be his best service for God. But he lost his family and his followers rebelled. How much injustice can life hand out? Plus, there would not have been any Amalekites if Saul had obeyed God (15:3, 9). This was cause for depression and spiritual hopelessness.

Psalm 25:16-17 could have been written in this situation, "Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish." One of the great verses of the Old Testament is 1 Samuel 30:6, which ends with the sentence, "But David found strength in the Lord his God." He did not deny the dilemma with wishful thinking. Nor did he indulge in the denial of his leadership with the typical ra-

tionalizations of what "could of, would of, or should of" been done. Instead, David relied on the reality of his personal relationship with "the Lord his God." His statement is the difference between a vague profession of religion and a vital possession of God.

The next decision was whether to pursue the Amalekites or not. The warriors were physically tired from their raids and emotionally exhausted from grief. David knew only God knew what to do next. We might view the situation as requiring no decision if our families were in danger. However, David could not deny his role of leadership which involved all the families taken captive. What God wanted to do in this terrible tragedy was utmost. Morton Kelsey also wrote, "What we do is a better indication of what we believe than what we think we think." Theorizing about God is less convincing than obeying him.

David used the usual ways of finding out God's will, (30:7, 8). Two practical steps can be learned from this situation. First, occupy your mind with the truth of God. The reality of the situation is with him. Second, pursue with determination the purpose from God. Further, truth of God is revealed in following his purposes. The Egyptian in the desert would not have been found if they had studied maps in Ziklag! No man has the right to get strength from the Lord unless he is prepared to also act on that new strength. David succeeded in the

battle that followed because God gave him the victory. He then insisted that all the loot be shared equally since none but God could claim credit for the victory.

Saul failed in his battle and fell on his sword to avoid capture and torture (31:4). He had retreated to a defensible mountainous position. His troops were selected, trained, and well-equipped soldiers. He was still king of Israel and had the resources of the nation available to him. But he failed. Why? God was not available to him. All of Saul's accomplishments as king and his military victories are forgotten because of his spiritual failures. By all human standards he should have succeeded, but he failed. David should have failed, but he succeeded. God was the difference and David sought him. So must we!

Wilbourn is pastor, Pinelake Church, Brandon.

Revival results

Cloverdale Church, Natchez (Adams): July 30-Aug. 5; preaching and music by Lisemby evangelistic family; 22 professions of faith; rededications and other commitments made; Weyland Gauntt, pastor.



Northside Church, Clinton, joined with Anderson United Methodist Church and Holy Ghost Missionary Baptist Church to build a playground in Clinton. Above, team members sort tires before beginning construction.

Northside, Clinton helps construct playground

By Tim Nicholas

For the past three years the youth of Northside Church, Clinton, have held mission projects in the city of Clinton rather than traveling away for such service.

This summer, the group of about 20, with several adult sponsors, worked jointly with two other church groups to construct a playground for children of a nearby community where there was a park, but no play area for children. The other churches participating were Anderson United Methodist and Holy Ghost Missionary Baptist.

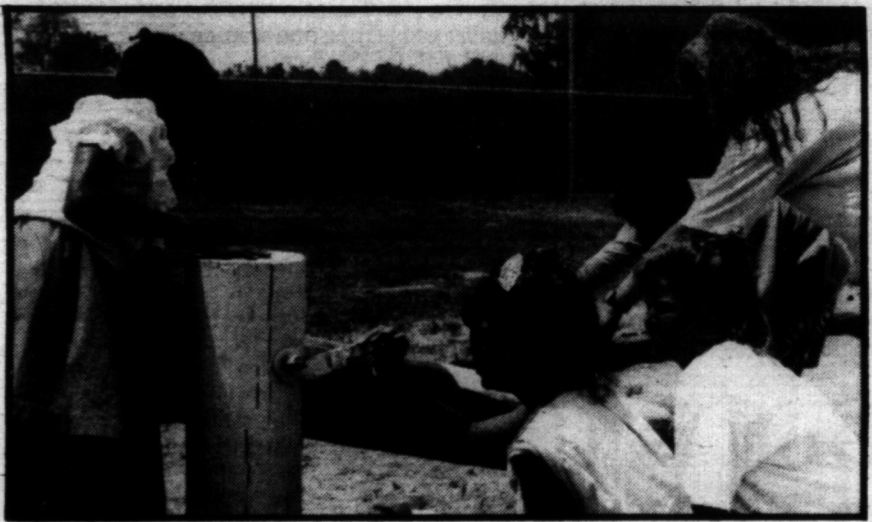
Joey Serio and Paul Jacobs Jr., of Northside designed the playground which consists of utility poles, cable spool reels, and used tires. Equipment was donated by the city of Clinton,

materials by local businesses, and the churches provided lunches for the three work days.

Said Jacobs of the project, "the youth realized they were capable of making a difference in their community — in the spirit of missions." He added that for young people, there is little they can take initiative on. "But here, Brian Whitfield, for instance, can say 'I put up a tire swing.'"

Previous Northside youth local projects included cleaning senior citizens' homes and yards, and working in soup kitchens. Many of their projects are connected to the Clinton Community Christian Corporation.

Nicholas is Communication Director, MBCB.



One of the jobs involved in the Clinton playground mission project was to paint utility poles, donated by the city. The youths worked three days to complete the playground.

Hands that talk also hug



Cindy Reeves of Charlotte, N.C., fulfilled two longtime dreams during the Kenya Coastal Crusade — to come to Africa and to share her faith with deaf people. Reeves, a member of Hickory Grove Baptist Church, ponders the sermon at the organization of Coast Baptist Church for the Deaf while embracing one of the younger children who attends Ziawani School for the Deaf. (BP PHOTO by Charles Ledford)

Central Hills Retreat depends on Margaret Lackey Offering

By David Townsend
Part III

"I have the pleasure of working with the campers in the Royal Ambassador Camp setting," said Dan West, director, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko, "but the most focused point of my attention is with the staffers who really are the backbone of the camping program."

The search for the summer staff begins each November.

His choices are guided by the skills, talents and the general impression gathered from personal interviews. "I prefer that staffers be active participants in their local Baptist church," West said, "though we have had a couple of staffers not Baptist."

"I like to see a student who is active in his local campus BSU activities come on the staff because his mind is already channeled toward ministry opportunity. We have a large number of fellows who are committed to some area of Christian vocation ministry. But that is not a factor in our enlisting staffers. However, I would say everyone who comes on our staff has made a commitment to find God's will in vocation choice."

He looks for young men who can lead one or more of the many activities offered during camp, including horseback riding, canoeing, the adventure challenge course, swimming, hand crafts, camp craft skills, and safety skills on the rifle and archery ranges.

"Every activity instructor is encouraged to write a spiritual application that he will share with every activity group where he applies the word of God to a life situation and helps those boys to interpret that word to their own lives. Our staffers are involved in teaching Bible studies daily and leading devotion periods several times a day. We need fellows who are patient, able to work with a group, and work with a cross section of people."

Missionaries are also enlisted for the summer. "We have a professional missionary who serves with us every week of camp."

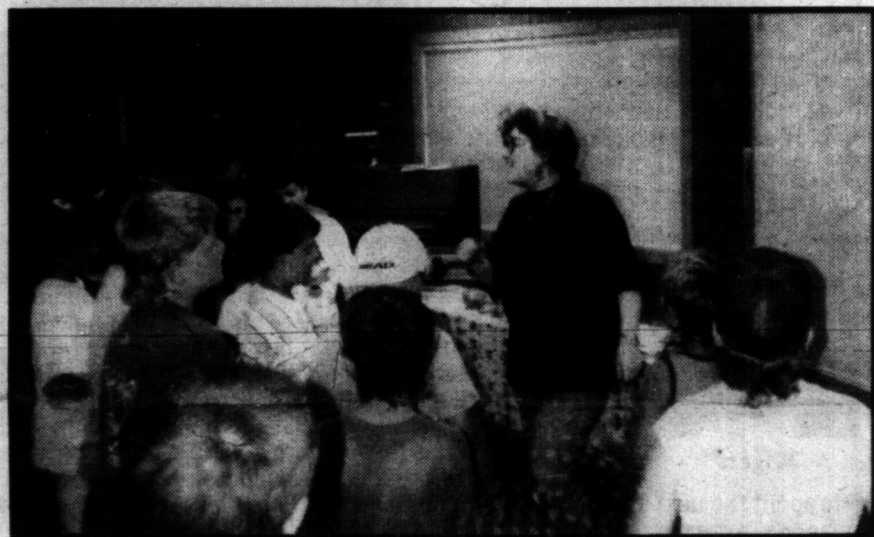
One resident missionary during the summer was Elysa Harvey from Gautier, who recently returned from duty as a journeyman in Swaziland.

Elysa did have some apprehension about her role at a boys' mission camp. "I was nervous at first that I would be the missionary at a boys camp, that they wouldn't be able to relate to a girl."

Maintaining the interest level of a fidgety camper is no easy task, but Elysa's concerns were short lived. It didn't take long for her to win the hearts of the campers and the staff and by the end of the week she was the



Camp craft activities instructor at Central Hills, Trent Holly of Vaiden, looks on as campers practice newly learned camping skills. Robert Clawson, 10, of Brandon; Joshua Byrd, 10, of Ridgeland; and Stephen Liles, 10, of Morton are at bench examining camping utensils. Joshua Smith, 11, of Poplarville; Nick Belk, 10, of Weir; Joey Simmons, 10, of Weir; Scott Watson, 10, of Jackson; and Jake Harrell, 10, of Morton practice building "teepee" and "box" shaped campfires.



Former journeyman missionary, Elysa Harvey of Gautier, leads mission study at Central Hills. Words on the chalk board are "Siyahamba gucanyen (We are walking in the light), Siyahamba (We are walking), Hamba gucanyen glencoe (Walking in the light of the Lord)."

crimson-faced recipient of a farewell serenade.

She kept the campers' attention with her own enthusiasm and by involving the boys in Swaziland missions. Campers learned the names of missionaries in Swaziland and took turns praying for them. They played Missionary Pictionary to reinforce facts they learned about Swaziland as they sang "We Are Walking in the Light of the Lord" in the Swaziland language. Campers also learned a special Christian handshake popular in Swaziland, which they practiced throughout the week.

Elysa, now enrolled at Southern Seminary, left Central Hills with some strong impressions: "I think the way our society is now, a lot of the boys wouldn't get to do many of the things they do at camp. A lot come from

broken homes where the father doesn't get to spend time, and a lot come from traditional homes but the dads are too busy. At Central Hills they meet a staff that really cares. Boys leave with a positive feeling better than when they got there. Even if they don't make a decision that week they are given an opportunity."

Townsend is an RA leader at Woodland Hills Church, Jackson.

N.O. students read Bible through

NEW ORLEANS — Fifty-five members of the New Orleans Seminary faculty, staff, and student body recently participated in a three-day, four-night vigil to read the Bible through nonstop in the seminary's Roland Q. Leavell Chapel.

Starting at 9:45 a.m. Wednesday, August 22, attendees, beginning with New Orleans Seminary President Landrum P. Leavell II, took turns standing behind the chapel pulpit to read through a New American Standard Bible. The Bible, containing the signature of each participant, was left on the pulpit at the end of the event,

7:17 a.m. Sunday, August 26.

Seminary family members who took part in the session experienced a range of emotions as they listened to the Bible being read straight through, said Becky Brown, staff member from Natchitoches, La. "There were many times when the reader and everyone listening broke into tears," she said, "especially during the recitation of Christ's death."

Leavell started the seminary's first chapel service of the new school year by recounting the Bible-reading experience and by reading the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

Baptist Record

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